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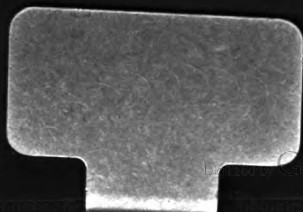
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MAURICE AND EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN.

A Monograph.

BY HARRIET PARR,

AUTHOR OF

'ESSAYS IN THE SILVER AGE,' 'LIFE AND DEATH OF JEANNE D'ARC,'

&c.



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PART THE FIRST.

LE CAYLA.

B

MAURICE AND EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN.



Part the First.

LE CAYLA.

I

IN the first decade of this century, at Le Cayla, an ancient château in Languedoc, were born a sister and brother, Eugénie and Maurice de Guérin, who lived and died obscurely, who, living, could never see the reason why of their sufferings, but who, dying, left behind them, in their letters and journals, a precious treasury of religious thought and consolation. In the great chaos of books with which the world from Solomon's days to our own has been confused and encumbered, two or three in every generation have deserved to be rescued from the perishable and perishing mass,

4 *Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin.*

and saved for all time. Amongst these rare trusts to posterity the remains of Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin claim a sacred niche; and to make their lovely pathetic story more popularly known is the object of this monograph.

II

THE traditions of Le Cayla ascribe to the Guérins a Venetian origin, and trace their establishment in France as far back as the beginning of the ninth century, when a Guarini (for so was the name written till 1553) was Count of Auvergne. In process of time, from the original stock sprang many off-sets, Lords of Montaigu, of Ols in Quercy, of Rinholes in Rouergue, of Apchier in the Gévaudan, of Laval, Saignes, and Le Cayla in Languedoc. The Guérins of Montaigu were long Earls of Salisbury, and from that stem twice the Knights of St. John chose them a Grand Master. Of this race was Guérin, Bishop of Senlis, equally hot in council and war, who ranged the French troops at the battle of Bouvines, claimed, as Chancellor of France, to rank with her peers, and

finally put on the cowl and died a monk of Chalais in 1230. They counted a cardinal of their lineage also, and a troubadour, a lord of Apchier, of whom mention is made in the literary annals of the Court of Adelaïde of Toulouse, niece of Louis VII. In their palmy times they allied themselves by marriage with some of the greatest houses in France, and never spared to give of their service to the King and the State in any generation.

The descent and titles of nobility of the Guérins of Le Cayla were confirmed by a supreme decree given at Montpellier in 1668, and they bear for arms : of gules with six besants of silver, three, two and one, in a field of azure ; and for motto : 'Omni exceptione majores.'

III

DURING the Great Revolution the house of Le Cayla fell on evil retributive days, and at the beginning of the present century was exceedingly impoverished. Maurice and Eugénie, heirs of all the genius and passionate devotion of their race, were heirs of its reverses as well, and had to

6 *Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin.*

prove, through many a harsh and sad experience, how much the gentle by birth and nurture find of material suffering in the straits of fortune.

Le Cayla is a very solitary place, and when they were young the château was ruinously old. It stands on the steep slope of a hill, dominated by a lofty tower. The shutters, decayed, broken, half-fallen from their hinges, hardly screened the rattling casements from the assaults of the wind in rough weather. Low-browed doorways, gloomy corridors, steps up and steps down in the ancient chambers, made traps and pitfalls for unaccustomed feet, but were dearly familiar to the children, who threaded them securely in the dark. To them Le Cayla remained always a beautiful and beloved home, charming beyond all the charms of cities and palaces elsewhere.

And it was beautiful, under the generous arch of its southern sky. The little brook of Andillac ran singing below its chalky cliffs. The terraced garden looked to the mountains across a valley of verdure, populous with sweet-throated birds. Woods, warrens, orchards, vineyards, fertile pastures surrounded it, and fields of corn flooded with

their golden waves all the rich plain to Gaillac. It was cheerful too. The busy sights and sounds of farm labour were not so far from the château but that the châtelaine could oversee her poultry-yard, her dairy, her damsels milking, churning, washing, laying up summer store for winter ; while the lord of the manor, turned cultivator, went his round of the fields in all weathers, with a master's eye to the cattle, the sheep, the swine ; to the men ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, as the season might be.

In such a home, to the children poverty never realises itself in the shape of personal privation. While the young birds stay in the nest, they are warmed and fed ; but the time comes when it is too narrow for all, and some must go quest for themselves, and labour and sorrow till they conquer a living, or are tired to death and give the quest up. And this is usually the lot of the last-born—was the lot of Maurice de Guérin.

When Maurice came into the world on the 4th of August, 1810, Eugénie was five years old, and had a brother older than herself, and a sister younger—Érembert and Marie—a good brother

and a dear sister; for love was the law at Le Cayla, and in all the intimate household details that she has left us, we never see it set aside. In her journal, written for Maurice—that exquisite record of her devotion which will keep their memories green in Christian literature—are many pleasant reminiscences of their early days together. Maurice was delicate from his birth; ‘his soul seemed often on his lips, ready to flee away,’ but he was a beautiful child, and his parents cherished him with the fondest solicitude. His baptism was celebrated with extraordinary distinction and festivity; and Eugénie, who was then living at Gaillac with her aunts, was brought to Le Cayla to be present at it. Two years later she came home again to stay, bringing him a little frock that she had made; she dressed him in it, and led him by the hand through the warren on the north side of the house, where he tottered a few steps by himself—the very first. Eugénie was in ecstasy, and ran to her mother to announce the wonderful news: ‘Maurice, Maurice has walked alone!’

Soon the little girl had other ideas about him, strifes, envyings, thrills of passion. Maurice, as

the baby of the house, received most kisses, caresses, bonbons; and Eugénie, suffering from the sharp thorn of jealousy, fancied herself neglected, and coveted beauty that she might be the better loved:—not comprehending yet that the expression of affection changes, and that it is towards the tiny and weak ones these tendernesses, ‘the milk of the heart,’ flow out most effusively. But her bitterness was short-lived. Already, at the dawn of reason, she developed remarkable force of character, warmth and steadfastness of attachment, and a perfect unselfishness. By-and-by she set herself to love Maurice. Éran was gay, was strong, was all for fun and frolic; Marie had a pair of round, apple-red cheeks, and great blue eyes—they could play and take heed to themselves; but Maurice had lain ill a year on his nurse’s knees, and was open to all the pretty cares and kindnesses she wanted an object for. Then she took him under her guard, as she did the lame chickens and all the other halt and suffering things at Le Cayla. They were her share of the pets, and to tend and comfort them was the sweet charity of her childhood.

Their mother, whose health was declining, who felt, perhaps, the shadow of death lengthening towards her already, was glad to watch Eugénie's protective love encircling her sick lamb, and his confiding, reciprocal affection; anticipating the days to come when they would need to be helpful to each other with something more than kisses and caresses—with consolations, counsels, prayers and succours of the soul.

Eugénie's intelligence blossomed early, and the natural sentiment of religion in her took a glow from her vivid imagination. There was a picture of the Crucifixion in her father's room, before which she was instructed to kneel when she said her prayers night and morning. The pathetic countenance of the dying Saviour revealed to her the wonderful mystery of Divine love. She brought all her little griefs to Him, and was consoled in telling them. She asked His help in all her troubles—once it was, that He would cause some stains on a new frock to go away, to save her a scolding; and as they faded, she took it for a miracle, which made her love God, and think nothing impossible to prayer and her picture.

From that time she brought her wishes and wants to the Cross as well as her woes, and asked for anything and everything she desired—even that her doll might have a soul—perhaps it was the only time she obtained nothing. She realised the Divine omnipresence with the quaintest simplicity, and believed and taught Maurice and Marie to believe that an angel presided over their nursery-games, calling it the ‘Angel Joujou.’

The childish life at Le Cayla, while Madame de Guérin lived, was indeed beautifully happy, though its sunshine was not quite without clouds and showers. Quick as Eugénie was, she had some severe passages over learning to read. But there was a certain cousin Victor, a frequent visitor at the château, who possessed an excellent gift of teaching without tears. When perched on his knee, she was encouraged; the asperities of printed language were magically smoothed away; the lesson went easily, cheerfully, and when they brought it to a triumphant conclusion, he rewarded her with marvellous stories, eloquently told. He made the charm of her childhood, and

her constant enduring love for him was all the love-romance of her uneventful life.

In this dear cousin Victor she had discovered a treasure of pure sympathy—that rarest of treasures! She was given to dreaming, and had a singular enthusiasm for the glories of God in Nature; and it was not every one who could appreciate her original ways or have patience with her poetic whims and reveries. When she lived at Gaillac with her aunts, she would rise after she had been put to bed, open the little window at the foot of it, and hang out star-gazing, at the imminent risk of falling into the street. One unlucky night she was caught, and the window was nailed up, so that she saw the fine luminaries no more. But both heart and imagination had abundant resources left in the daylight scenery of her romantic home. Then, at nine years old, she went on a visit to Montels, an old castle amongst the mountains, where her cousins Thézac lived—a real old castle, part in ruins, with love-stories and ghost-stories, and all manner of old legends playing hide-and-seek in its old rooms. In one hung the portraits of several generations of lords

and ladies of the castle—the most distinguished a lady in a ball-dress splendidly gay, side by side with a Capuchin wrapt in pious meditation over a skull. Eugénie delighted in this stately drawing-room, but she delighted still more in the freedom of the grand-court, and the vast green gloom of the chestnut avenues on the mountain-side, where she and her cousins ran and played.

The sportive season at Le Cayla lasted only a year or two longer. Madame de Guérin had gradually become a great sufferer, but she suffered with Christian constancy, and her children never heard a complaint from her lips. They saw her always serene, gentle, even smiling sometimes, and though warned of what was approaching, they could not believe it. But one night she passed quietly away—so quietly that Eugénie, who had lain down along the foot of her bed and fallen asleep, was not aware of it until her father, pale, in tears, roused and led her from the room. She was then thirteen—of an age when impressions are lively and permanent, and as her love for her mother had been intense, so was her grief. It took the bent of excessive devotion. At this

crisis, 'The Lives of the Saints' fell into her hands, and their acts and sufferings excited her emulation. She was sent for change to her good aunts at Gaillac, and there one day, in a passion of sorrow, she rushed to the church of St. Pierre, and casting herself on her knees before the image of the Virgin in the Chapel of the Rosary, with eager wild prayers besought the Blessed Mary in Heaven to take her under her benign protection.

Looking back to this period of trial from more experienced years, she felt how much she needed then the tender watchfulness of a mother. She did many things that a judicious mother would have disallowed, and though they left no burden on her conscience, neither did they morally profit her. 'For the honour of God I would have cast myself into the fire!' she says, and adds, 'Truly, the Almighty does not desire that. He does not desire the harm one does to one's health by that ardent, mistaken piety, which, in destroying the body, leaves many faults to thrive.' And thereupon she grounds an opinion that 'The Lives of the Saints' is a dangerous book for the young—and even for some who are not young. But it

remained to the last a favourite book with her, and occupied that place in her daily devotional reading which, had she been English and Protestant, would have been given to the study of the Holy Scriptures. She lived an almost perfect Christian, but she would perhaps have been nearer attaining to that inward peace which passes understanding, if she had oftener exchanged her volume of traditions and legends for the Divine truth of God's Word.

IV

MADAME DE GUÉRIN, in view of her death, had solemnly confided her dear little fragile Maurice to Eugénie's love, and Eugénie accepted the trust with a passionate desire to fulfil it. But with the good mother the sunshine had vanished from Le Cayla. Her husband mourned for her with long regrets, and the shadow of his mourning fell upon the children. Their grandmother at Cahuzac had lived through terrible days, and fireside stories prevailed amongst them of poverty and disaster hereditary in their family, and of most of their kindred dead in misfortune. Maurice, child as he

was, felt all his life after haunted by presentiments of calamity. His sisters suffered less. They grew up at Le Cayla as in a convent; far from the world, and in ignorance of nearly all that harms the soul, and develops the seeds of evil. Eugénie was fond of birds, of flowers, of reading; and when Éran brought home from college the 'Funeral Sermons' of Bossuet which he had received as a prize, she fell to devouring them with ardour, attracted by the beautiful thoughts of death and heaven which found a sympathetic echo in her own emotions. Another book, whose influence on her tone of mind is perceptible throughout her journal, was 'The Poetical Meditations' of Mons. de Lamartine, which she read at sixteen.

Maurice manifested very early a predilection for the ecclesiastical condition, and his father, who had grafted in his mind his own firm principles of religion, encouraged it. Eugénie was glad of his pious vocation, believing it to be the best and safest way through a troublesome world. He was placed under the instruction of the curé of the parish; and every day she said a *Pater* that he might do his lessons well, and not deserve rebuke.

On Sundays he was a chorister at Andillac, and when he swung the censer at mass, Eugénie thought that he looked already like a beautiful little angel. He had no companions of his age to be merry with, and even in his play he forestalled his intended work, and improvised mimic sermons, which he preached, with his sisters for audience, from a hollow under a bank in the wood, called by them the Pulpit of St. Chrysostom. Then he followed his tutor, the curé, to the beds of the sick and dying poor, and caught a precocious melancholy from the spectacle of their destitution and agony. Perhaps in imagination he exaggerated the habit of sadness that arose out of this premature disenchantment with life; for though of a sensitive, dreamy, poetic strain, in his behaviour there appeared so much boyish vivacity that, to ordinary observers, he was only a mischievous, heedless lad, like the rest of lads. But his distinction of nature and his genius were palpable to his sisters and teachers. Eugénie counted on him as the son who would revive the glory of their family; and one of his masters, when enquired of by Mons. de Guérin as to his capacity,

replied, 'Ah, sir, you have there a transcendent child!'

Maurice had the same enthusiasm for Nature as Eugénie—a more intense enthusiasm. No poet ever with finer subtlety interpreted her impressions on the soul. From childhood he studied her mysteries with ardent devotion. He would pass long hours of reverie under the trees or contemplating the horizon; and in the beautiful summer days, when the air is full of voices, he set his vague thoughts to words of music, which Eugénie treasured as the first utterances of the famous writer that was to be. In one of these poetic essays he records his regrets at leaving home for the first time. They tell him many things of Toulouse, but will the city give him anything so altogether lovely as Le Cayla? and he bids Eugénie tune her lyre, and come and sing to him at school, as the lark that is free comes and sings to the lark in captivity.

But he was nevertheless joyful to go to school. He was twelve years old; and with all his delight in the woods and fields, the mountains and the valleys, he had a pulse of healthy ambition in

him, and a desire for knowledge. Eugénie's thoughts followed him with an almost maternal solicitude, and from the date of his departure for Toulouse began that intimate correspondence which only ended with Maurice's life. He writes to her :—

‘DEAR EUGÉNIE,—I wish it were possible to have a sister at the seminary. But do not be uneasy; I am very happy here. My masters love me; my companions are excellent. I am particularly friendly with one, of whom I will tell you. He begins to speak my language [a sort of language of his own invention], and by this means we communicate with each other, and play at *thought* without anyone suspecting. I am going full sail into the Latin country. You will have a better master next holidays. Take care of my pigeons. I sing in the chapel.

‘Adieu. I kiss you, and beg you will kiss Pepone (my papa) and all the family. Tell them I am very glad to be here.’

It was on the eve of Twelfth Day, 1822, that Maurice arrived with his father at Toulouse. The

journey was made in the old family chariot, drawn by Mons. de Guérin's favourite mare ; and though Maurice's heart ached cruelly at the parting from Le Cayla, and the tears were often in his eyes, the love of novelty possessed him so vividly, that he stared through the sorrowful mist with astonishment and delight at all he saw.

Maurice wrote from school to Eugénie that he was glad to be there, but the atmosphere of a crowd did not suit him. He forgot none of the lessons of home in the society of his comrades ; but solitude had made him timid, and his timidity was a curb on his independence of mind, against which he chafed grievously—longing often to speak his opinion, and not finding the courage. His conscience suffered not a little from this constraint, for silence sometimes amounted to a denial of principle. Being proud, and fond of approbation, he contracted besides an anxious minuteness in all the duties he had to do, dreading lest they should not be well done, or not done in time ; and this anxiety pursued him everywhere, seizing upon all his actions to consider their nature and foresee their consequences ; so that

there was hardly a moment in the day that did not bring him a pang, produced by the tremulous disquiet of a mind for ever in alarm. These nervous tortures notwithstanding, Maurice worked successfully and well; for when he had been two years at the seminary, he was so distinguished for his abilities and good conduct that, on the report he heard of him, the Archbishop of Toulouse, Mgr. de Clermont Tonnerre, preferred a request to his father for permission to take charge of his future education. But Mons. de Guérin declined to divest himself of his parental responsibility; and at fourteen, this child of so much love and so many brilliant hopes was sent to Paris, and placed at the Collège Stanislas for the completion of his studies.

V

To Paris from his southern home was a far exile for the delicate and sensitive Maurice, and a long exile. He was more than five years away without returning to Le Cayla. These five years embraced all the flowering time of his sister Eugénie's life—a safe life externally, busy with household tasks,

encircled with love of kinsfolk and friends, brightened with eloquent thoughts, raised above all things by holy faith, but still unquiet at the heart of it. The religious impulse that she had received at her mother's death had never relaxed; but human nature was very strong in her, and kept up a perpetual struggle with her saintly aspirations. Rich in all powers of the mind, eminently poetic, equally endowed with imagination and good sense, with wit and reason, she was yet so penetrated with that sentiment of Catholicism which exalts renunciation above enjoyment, and proclaims all earthly objects unworthy the labour and sorrow of a soul destined to immortality, that her scruples of conscience made almost sins of her Divine gifts, and in repressing the instincts of her genius she found a perennial means of self-mortification.

At intervals her force of character triumphed over this ascetic principle, and she had free and happy days, when her beautiful thoughts flowed in beautiful words, as water flows from the mountain spring. She could write charmingly on a mere nothing—on the swallows flying past her window, on the old latch of a cottage door, on the new

bell at Andillac, ringing the *angelus* for the first time—and she had an exquisite delight in the indulgence. But this very delight it was that alarmed her; and her spiritual director made a merit of denying her literary taste, lest it should mislead her from the humility and seclusion proper to a woman.

There was a year or two when she loved society and conversation and dress a little, and had dreams—beautiful dreams—but she confesses none. The dear cousin Victor of her childhood was away in Paris, an officer in the king's guard, and a visit to Toulouse, to Alby, to Rayssac in the mountains, was all the change that entered into the still monotony of life at Le Cayla, 'where they passed days without seeing any living thing but the sheep, without hearing any living thing but the birds.' But Eugénie was most happily constituted to live in the country. Its commonest pleasures, its varieties of season, of weather, were all events to her; and when her domestic duties were done, she had her books, her meditations, and a great correspondence. Everyone liked to receive her letters; her talent for composition being

diverted from more open courses, ran with a familiar charm in this narrow groove.

Then at seventeen, in the enthusiasm of girlhood, she had made a friend, Louise de Bayne, the fairest, most sunshiny figure in the foreground of the old manor. The home of Louise was at Rayssac, but they exchanged visits and frequent letters; their messenger, in the absence of any regular post to and from the mountains, being a chance curé, a market-going farmer, or a pedlar travelling his circuit through the scattered villages.

And beyond and above all other interests there was her constant solicitude for Maurice, whose progress she watched with the most devoted love. During his first long absence in Paris, his letters to her faithfully portrayed the development of his mind, and the growth of his characteristic melancholy. There was that in them which gave her a confused prevision of trials to come. The nervous perplexities which had embarrassed him at the seminary of Toulouse, embarrassed him still more on the wider stage of Stanislas. At the root of them lay an irksome pride, eager for

applause, and exquisitely alive to discouragement, and side by side with it a mortifying sense of helplessness and insufficiency. He could be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, and while achieving what others regarded as great successes, and winning several life-long friends, he fantastically deplored himself as sick of the world—utterly weak and miserable, and alone in his misery. There is one amongst his letters of this period addressed to the Abbé Buquet, his master at Stanislas, in which he makes a searching analysis of his circumstances, actual, moral and spiritual. It is strained and even affected, but as an autobiographic portrait of a poet at eighteen, it is a touching psychological study, and a real curiosity in literary history.

Maurice's intense religious feelings remained, but his vocation for the ecclesiastical life had disappeared, and towards the end of his college course, when it became necessary to choose a profession, he hesitated, was restless, dissatisfied, and incapable of any steadfastness of purpose. He took up the study of the civil code, but he hated it, and the notion of a life in the law-courts

weighed on him like a nightmare. The prospect of teaching for his bread was even more odious to him still. Eugénie warned him often of the perils of vague reverie and romantic imagination, and while he confessed to her that he loved to give himself up to sweet illusions and to that delicious sadness which has so dangerous a charm for the heart, he entreated her to believe that he had fallen into no snares or errors; for that reflection had forewarned his imagination, and stripped the real world of men and things of all false glitter and illusion.

Maurice grew ultimately out of these morbid phantasms, and desired nothing better than that the affectations and mental vagaries of his college-days should be forgotten; but though he, perhaps, played a little at world-weariness and ennui, and said more about them than the truth, they were essential and consistent traits in his character then and always. He ~~was~~ not one of whom worldly success could be predicated in any shape. The poetical instinct was at the core of his life—its bitter-sweet preservative, to which he owed all in him that was permanently good. His delicate

organisation made task-work painfully hard ; yet he had his way to win, and conscience and necessity spurred him to perpetually renewed endeavours. A little hope, a little good-luck cheered him infinitely ; and it is pathetic to note how, while he had the spring of youth in him, each casual, delusive gleam was gaily welcomed as the certain harbinger of a summer of prosperity.

The dejected tone of his letter to the Abbé Buquet was not his every-day tone. To Eugénie he wrote in a much more natural strain, though still forebodingly. He sees life before him as a rugged path up which he will have to climb rather than walk, and he feels the need of a helping and sustaining hand. His heart yearns to her : they are alike ; their minds are cast in one mould : where can he find a better friend than such a sister ? His father's austere plain sense daunts him : he should never dare to tell to him his fugitive thoughts and dreams and fancies. Will she be his confidante, and aid him henceforward with her counsels and friendship ?

‘ Oh, that my arms were long enough to embrace you everywhere, dear Maurice ! ’ was the responsive

cry of Eugénie's lovingness; and she encouraged his affectionate impulses, sent him letters full of Le Cayla and sweet pious thoughts, and copies of verses, such as her soul flowed into when she was pensive and happy.

Maurice urged her to put her scruples by, and to go on writing her poetry, let who would condemn her for it. He recognised her rarely beautiful talent, and envied her the contemplative, calm, country life which had nourished it to a gracious maturity. 'Oh! how much more you know, with what Nature and your own happy, facile genius inspire you, than I, with all my Greek and Latin!' he exclaims; and then he pours forth in a flood his feelings, his hopes, fears, confidences, as to one who will understand them all, and tells her where he thinks their kindred spirits meet: it is in that pure, ennobling melancholy which Plato describes as man's confused remembrance of his lost innocence and bliss.

The devotion that Maurice required from his sister was soon to be his without any rival to share it. Her cousin Victor—that friend so tenderly loved, to whose elder, experienced guardian-

ship she had entrusted her brother when he went first to Paris—died and was buried at Versailles in 1829. Eugénie was no longer a girl, and she grieved for him with the grief of a passionate woman—almost she died of grieving. For a year or two death was her ever-present thought, until, at length, the love of God consoled her, and she accepted Maurice as the great, the sole absorbing earthly care and interest of her solitary life.

About the time of her bereavement, Maurice had a hope of returning home, and a prospect of remaining permanently there, and very glad he was in this hope and prospect; but they escaped him for the present, and it was not until the mid-summer of 1831 that he revisited Le Cayla, when Eugénie had the long-deferred joy of embracing him again, and the satisfaction of finding him not quite so prematurely indifferent to the world as the philosophic tone of his correspondence had led her to suppose.

Indeed, his natural buoyancy broke out into positive glee in a short note to his father, announcing the probable day of his arrival. If he

does not find a horse at Gaillac, he will walk home—it will be the happiest walk of all his life! Shall he be in time for the harvest, and to eat cherries? It is ten years since he climbed a cherry-tree. He will be delighted to try it again—it will make him forget that he is nearly one-and-twenty. One-and-twenty! He cannot get used to the idea, he feels still so like a child!

VI

THE return of Maurice de Guérin to Le Cayla was a memorable event. Everyone was charmed with him, everyone was attracted to love him. He was distinguished, he was elegant, his countenance was beautiful; and he was so gentle, studious, religious, and retiring in his ways, that people talked of him in the country as a young saint. He had left none but pleasant feelings behind him, and he found a warm and universal welcome. His good nurse came to see him with a pocketful of nuts; Rose Durel, a pious old woman of the village whom he had always liked to visit, showed him, still safe under her cottage eaves, a swallow's

nest, that he had charged her to take care of when he went first to school at Toulouse. All the little society of the neighbourhood had open arms for him; his grandmother, his great-uncles and aunts, his cousins at Gaillac and Alby, were ready to fête him; the excellent curés, M. Leiner at Andillac, and M. Bories at Cahuzac, were pleased with his pious demeanour, though his religious vocation had passed away.

It was a happy coming home, and Maurice was happy in it. With Éran he made war on the partridges; with Marie, a practical household person, much interested in events, he talked the politics of the day—a very unsettled day just then. To Eugénie only, in old favourite walks—through the oak-wood, up the hill to the Seven Springs, down the warren to the great vine—did he pour out his manifold difficulties, discontents, and aspirations; but even in these, he betrayed so much of the fine quality of his genius, that nothing could discourage her proud and tender hopes of him. These hopes his father shared, though he distrusted his son's desultory tastes; and when they came to discuss his future career,

Maurice heard himself condemned to further discipline of regular work, to another term of exile in Paris, and the distasteful study of the law.

But this prospect grew by-and-by less intolerable when his imagination caught a glimpse of the dear responsibilities of love. That happened to him which always happens to susceptible young poets at the dawn of the passions. He lost his heart to Eugénie's sweet friend, Louise de Bayne, and his poetical fancy had at once a theme, and his existence an object. However the event might turn in the future, he was at present much the livelier for his new interest: he did not look far forward, or crave yet for any certainties: sufficient unto the day was the gladness thereof.

At the end of August, when he had satisfied the claims of home, and of kinsfolk round about home, Maurice went with Eugénie to Rayssac—to Louise's eyrie amongst the mountains, where sometimes, at night, under their windows, they could hear the wolves and dogs, howling and fighting like hell broke loose.

It was a charming household at Rayssac. M. de Bayne was a scholar, a gentleman well read in

books old and new, and with all his attention awake to the rapid acts of contemporary history in Church and State. He had a son, Charles, and several daughters, one married, the Countess Pulchérie, and Louise and Leontine, maidens—Leontine, a busy, quick-witted, keen-tongued creature, whom Eugénie called *The Bee*; and Louise, a bright, animated figure, with the loveliest Spanish face, and the silveriest of voices; wanting only a shade more seriousness, to Eugénie's mind, to be the very crown and perfection of womanhood. But Maurice loved her just as she was, with all her dear defects of vivacity and pretty airs of philosophic meditation.

The daily life at Rayssac was much the same as the daily life at Le Cayla. To mass in the morning, a ride, a drive, a walk in the afternoon; in the cold mountain evenings all the family together round the hearth, where the cricket sang, and Maurice rhymed a song on the cricket. These pleasant evenings were kept up with conversation and music, and mimic wars of criticism on favourite books and authors, until midnight; and Maurice was in his element—his shyness, his pride for-

gotten, he was the best and gayest company in the world.

This delightful visit ended only too soon : Maurice coveted even the cricket's crevice by the fire where Louise sat, and would fain have prolonged it for ever. But a little while, and the ardent young poet was at Le Cayla again, pacing the terrace at twilight with his sisters, confiding to Eugénie his first dream of love, and seeking encouragement for his timid hopes. A little while more, and he was back in Paris, his love an opportune and blessed safeguard to him ; and Eugénie was wearying after him with all her heart, asking, when he had been gone but three days, if it was not three years since he had left her.

This meeting again for a few months after their long separation, had drawn the brother and sister very closely together. When Maurice went to Paris at fourteen, Eugénie knew him only by sight, as it were ; but now his character was formed ; they had entered into each other's minds, had exchanged thoughts, sentiments, experiences, secrets. The discovery of a perfect mutual sympathy was the result : 'they were as much alike as two eyes

looking out of one forehead.' Where Maurice wanted stability and perseverance, Eugénie gave him the help and encouragement that spring from a believing love; where Eugénie wanted clear vision of how far she might safely indulge her talents, Maurice was ready with serviceable advice against over-scrupulousness, and sound critical principles for their use and cultivation. They enjoyed the same scenes and the same books; the same deep religious feelings animated them both; and the same constitutional melancholy tintured their views of life and the world. Thus their mature friendship had a broad foundation, and the best elements of permanence.

It was November when Maurice returned to Paris. He did not re-enter at Stanislas, but took up his lodging with his cousins, M. Auguste Reynaud and his wife Félicité, who kept a small day-school in the Rue d'Anjou. He had a pretty room in their house, which was both study and bedroom, where he could work at his ease, and where he tried to work on a conscientious system. He fell to at the code, for shame lest it should be said that it had beaten him; but all his inclinations tended

towards poetry, history, the philosophy of religion, and the Bible. It was the winter season, and he had his share of Paris gaieties amongst his friends—two weddings, several balls, concerts, and musical soirées, which helped him to get rid of his timidity and awkwardness in society—but his home-life was almost as quiet as at Le Cayla. His window looked into a great fir-tree in a little square of garden, which was like the fir-trees of the mountains, all hung with silvery banners when the hoar-frost fell. Occasionally he spent his disengaged evenings with his cousins, but oftener in his sanctum alone by the fire, with his beloved books and reveries, writing verses or his confessions to Eugénie, with no drawback to his comfort, save now and then a pitying thought for the poor who were out in the bitter night cold of the streets. He began a drama, 'Peter the Hermit,' and Eugénie pictured him to herself studious over the Bible as a Father of the Church in his cell. Her fancy made the round of the world in the twinkling of an eye: if her feet had been shod with shoes of Fancy's swiftness, Maurice knew where she would often be—at a corner of his fire-

side, blowing, stirring the embers, cheering him with a merry blaze when he and they were dull. She did cheer him there with the light of her good counsels, and with oracular sentences from Rayssac, out of which he struck sparks of hope so vivid that they made him long for more such riddles to decipher.

‘A charming prophetess has just foretold me that I shall soon be comforted for your absence. If she thinks that I shall forget you, she is a false prophetess. What does she mean then?—that you will come back? But it is so far off, that coming back! That you will write to me? That indeed consoles, but not altogether. I have it, I have it! You will write to me, but it will be printed, gilded, bound. Behold, you are an author, you are famous, and I am in Paris! That is what she means: she knows I wish it, that venerable little witch, and she does not like to predict me misfortunes. I accept the augury, which your letter besides confirms. You are at last launched on your career, and far, far from that code which weighed on you like Atlas.’

Yes, it was all over with the code and Maurice's brave resolutions! The law had run a very unequal race with his favourite studies from the outstart, and after a few feeble efforts and many halts of weary repugnance, he flung it finally on one side, and left it behind him. In his antipathy to rules and bonds in labour, his imagination had always turned to the tempting paths of literature, and they now appeared to be opening to him a pleasant, discursive prospect. His circle of acquaintance had been increased by an introduction to the staff of writers employed on the *European Review*, amongst whom he found prompt appreciation of his talents. His very first essay was accepted ('The Life of the Blessed Nicolas de Flüe'), and printed in the part for January 15, 1832. Maurice sent it to Eugénie, with orders to pass it on to Louise, and tell her it was his; 'for he had found means to slip in something in speaking of the Swiss mountains where the blessed Nicolas lived.'

In the pleasant flush of a first success, Maurice had grown impatient for explanation with Louise, and he urged Eugénie to try and throw him more

light on her friend's sentiments, though it were only by such oracular phrases as she had quoted him before. But Eugénie could afford him none, could seek none for him by letter—that would be too indiscreet; and she and Louise had not met since his visit to Rayssac. Charles de Bayne had been to Le Cayla, but it was by himself—an event that had given grand occasion for gossip to the scandal-mongers of the rustic community round about the château. Eugénie was enquired of concerning his age and fortune, and overheard the tattlers at Andillac whispering at low mass, '*He is too young for her*;' so she told Maurice, only half-resigned to the inevitable scrutiny of the busy, malicious clique. 'But they sit in judgment on everything, from our wooden shoes to our consciences, that sage tribunal; they know everything—our thoughts, words, actions, omissions, everything, save how tiresome is their curiosity!'

When Maurice announced his appearance in print, Eugénie made haste to congratulate him, as being now fairly started on the road to glory and fortune, and needing only to take his leisure and go forward. But her joy and confidence were

exceedingly short-lived : for one thing was wanting—a most material thing in Maurice's circumstances ; the *European Review* did not pay its minor contributors, and his articles were gratuitous. An arrangement with the editor of a journal at Nancy to supply his columns with news of Paris turned out no more profitable. He had not private means to maintain himself till better luck ; and, for a climax of discouragements, M. Auguste Reynaud had not pupils enough in his school at the moment to subsidise a second master—the resource on which Maurice had counted, if literary matters came to the worst with him. Before the winter was well over, the poor young author's first effort to create for himself an independent life was tired out, and, in the general collapse of his hopes and expectations, he despondently obeyed a recall from his father to Le Cayla.

VII

THIS return home of Maurice de Guérin was very different from the first. When he and the code came to utter divorce, he had charged

Eugénie to keep the quarrel secret, and even if asked, Was he going on still with the study of the law? to reply, Yes, and always, yes: he would take the lie on his own conscience. But the truth was out when he reappeared at Le Cayla in March; and it may be imagined what he had to endure from the reproachful airs of those friends who admire nothing but sober progress, and never believe in genius until its crown is won—not its crown of thorns, but of standard gold, which comes with the purple and fine linen of this world's success.

The beautiful spring passed, the glorious summer followed, and he was still at home, but unhappy—so unhappy that he regretted his very existence, and his thoughts turned again with longing contemplation to the quiet seclusion of a religious house. His dream of love had done him good, though it was no more than a dream, and vanished like one when he went again with Eugénie to Rayssac in the harvest, where he saw Louise for the last time. A few tender verses, a page in his journal, are all the conclusion of the story.

‘At two o’clock of a sunny September afternoon, I said adieu to the happiness that meets us at a certain turn on the road of life, that beguiles us a league or two onwards, discoursing of rapturous things with an angel’s tongue, till, all at once, comes a cross-road, and if we must take the right, it takes the left, saying with gentle raillery, “Traveller! good-bye: a prosperous journey to you.”’

Maurice and his love parted in amity; no separation came of it between the families, and no coolness between Eugénie and Louise. Maurice did not break his heart, and the blithe cricket of Rayssac did not pine in melancholy; but their attachment had been sincere, and their mutual interest was tender and lifelong. From the rock of disappointment gushed the fount of poetry to console the lover: all things pass that give a grace to youth, and when Maurice set their passing to music, he was not far from the resignation of a true philosopher.

But the desire for retreat to a religious house gained upon him in his accumulated misfortunes.

He had already proved, as he believed, his inability to withstand temptation and battle with difficulty, and he felt that whatever good resolutions he might make in the country, two days abroad in Paris would put them all to flight. 'It is the sense of my weakness that induces me to seek a shelter, and gives me strength to break with the world, to abide more surely with God,' he writes in his journal—that pathetic record of an ineffectual life which he began at Le Cayla during the July of his present visit.

Amongst the refuges open to students of distinction in want of help and rest, none so much attracted him as La Chênaie, a small monastic establishment in Brittany, directed by the famous Abbé de Lamennais. Novices were received there absolutely free of expense, and a year's probation preceded the first vows—an interval long enough for Maurice to learn whether that pearl of a religious vocation, which he had lost since the days of his childhood, might possibly be found of him again. It was not without great reluctance that M. de Guérin yielded to his son's earnest solicita-

tion for leave to place himself under the guidance of M. de Lamennais. But his consent was given at last, and Eugène Boré, a college companion of Maurice at Stanislas, who had since gone to La Chênaie, appealed for him to its chiefs, as a young man singularly gifted, but of irresolute character, and, above all things, needing encouragement and the prop of a friend. This appeal was favourably heard, and Maurice was accepted.

Through all his failures and vacillations, Eugénie never suffered her faith in her beloved brother to change or waver; but she was not sorry that he should find a holy and learned retirement until he grew morally stronger to stand alone. He remained at Le Cayla through the autumn, and on the 1st of November, loitering with her in the woods, where the fallen leaves rustled under foot, he talked of their approaching separation—a separation which, though neither foresaw it, was to continue through another weary five years. Both were sad: it was All Souls' Day, when they remembered their mother: the beauty of the world was perishing around them; and Maurice recited some

verses on the decline of the season, which Eugénie called to mind long after, when he, too, was gone, and she was left to her tears and consuming regrets.

Now fall the sapless leaves
Silent upon the grass;
Now rise the moaning winds,
And down the valley pass.

It is their time to fall,
When winter storms increase:
A blast from out the grave
Reaps living souls in peace.

PART THE SECOND.

BRITTANY.

Part the Second.

BRITTANY.

I

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN arrived in Paris from Le Cayla in the beginning of December, and a few days afterwards set out for Brittany alone. Passing through Rennes, he was hospitably entertained at a house of missionaries planted there by the brother of M. de Lamennais, and at Dinan he was met by Élie de Kertanguy, one of his future co-disciples. La Chênaie was only six miles from Dinan, and as they drew near the home of his election, Maurice espied it through the trees—an old white house, with steep roof and dormer windows, which reminded him of Ráyssac. A vast garden, divided by a terrace of pollard limes, extended in front; on the west lay a little lake, and then on every side pressed woods, brown winter woods; and over

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all, the low grey sky of Brittany without a glimpse of sun.

When M. de Lamennais founded the religious society over which he ruled in this solitude amongst solitudes, he was a vehement supporter of the authority of Rome; he counted amongst his associates such men as M. de Montalembert and the Abbé Lacordaire; and his earlier pupils were sedulously trained to serve the cause of Catholicism. But his bold, erratic genius had broken bounds since then; and when Maurice de Guérin sought the shelter of La Chênaie, the chief of the order had once incurred the censure of the Pope, and, after a reluctant, insincere submission, was preparing to brave it again.

There are two portraits of this celebrated man, the one drawn by his adversaries, the other by his adherents. They have not a single feature in common. The first represents him as an ambitious priest: disappointed of promotion and a cardinal's hat, turned furious, unscrupulous, even to the perversion of his God's gift of genius to the devil's work of provoking the people to rebellion, and setting Church and State in a flame. The

second represents him as a confessor and martyr for the truth that makes men free, a faithful apostle, righteously indignant at fraud and oppression, whose words the future will redeem, however they be rejected of the present.

The crisis in the religious world of France, of which M. de Lamennais was the most conspicuous figure, is a history in itself, and is only alluded to here as the epoch when Maurice de Guérin came under his influence. In the Letters and Journal of the young disciple are some interesting memorials of his great master at the most critical period of his career, which a brief prefatory sketch will render more comprehensible to the general reader.

Félicité de Lamennais was born at St. Malo in 1782: The younger son of a noble family ruined by the Great Revolution, all the fortune that he and his brother Jean inherited was the old country house of La Chênaie, in the neighbourhood of Dinan. Jean took orders early, but Félicité did not enter the priesthood till the age of twenty-nine, after passing through a stormy and difficult youth. Almost at once, however, he established his name as an able and original thinker, by the publication of the

first part of his 'Essay on Indifference,' which was extolled as the finest defence of Catholicism since Origen and Augustin. But the successive parts of the work did not bear out this eulogium. The second and succeeding volumes breathed a democratic spirit, and were sown with social and religious theories that brought the writer into suspicion with both temporal and spiritual authorities. He hurried to Rome to dissipate the cloud, and was received with honour at the Vatican, but at the same time he was counselled to practise moderation—which it was not in him to practise.

On his return to France, he shut himself up at La Chênaie, and occupied his leisure by translating 'The Imitation of Christ.' A rumour was circulated and believed in Paris that he had refused an offer of the purple while in Rome; but when he issued from his seclusion, and set himself to stir the embers of old Gallican hatred by discoursing of 'Religion considered in its Relation to Social and Political Order,' his opponents cried out that he had only been disappointed of it, and that he was showing his teeth for vindictiveness. The Government prosecuted him as a preacher of sedition, but being

ably defended by the famous advocate Berryer, and only condemned in a fine of thirty-six francs, his friends took his trial for a triumph. Again he retired for a term to La Chênaie, and produced two admirable little books of piety: 'The Guide of Early Youth,' and 'The Day of a Christian;' which he followed up by a work of quite another character: 'The Progress of Revolution and the War against the Church.'

Till now men had been accustomed to confound the idea of Catholic piety with devotion to legitimate royal rights. The restoration of the Bourbons had tended to strengthen this antiquated theory, and only a few persons, of whom the leader was Lamennais, ventured as yet to teach in France that men might be faithful Christians without being serfs of any political creed or hereditary family. It was a dangerous doctrine to promulgate, when the throne of Charles X. was already shaken by the throes of a rising democracy, and the Archbishop of Paris promptly launched his censure against the priest who dared to assume the function of a popular prophet. But the Three Days of July 1830 were at hand, and Lamennais, fore-

casting their approach, defied the censure. When the storm broke, and the King was driven from the country, he reaped the honours of a seer. The clergy of France sided with him, and many young priests proclaimed themselves his enthusiastic proselytes. In the foremost rank of them were some whose distinction rivalled his own—the eloquent preacher Lacordaire, the Abbé Gerbet, and the Abbé Salinis, since Bishop of Amiens. M. de Montalembert gave them his help and influence in founding a journal to spread their opinions—*L'Avenir*—which had for its epigraph ‘God and Liberty,’ and Lamennais for its editor-in-chief. But its life was not destined to be long. Certain articles on the text of Theocracy, as the only refuge of modern societies, brought Lamennais a second warning from Rome, and again he made a pilgrimage to the Papal Court to avert a storm. But his present offence was esteemed too audacious to be condoned, and by an Encyclical Letter, published in the autumn of 1832, the articles in question were utterly condemned. Lamennais was too much enraged to submit at once to the decree, but he at length yielded to the tender solicitations of his

brother, of Lacordaire, and Gerbet—‘To have peace,’ he said; and his journal being suspended, he betook himself to La Chênaie, to ruminate his ‘Sketch of a Philosophy,’ his ‘Words of a Believer,’ and ‘Book of the People,’ which brought upon him ultimately the anathema of the Church and exclusion from her pale.

Lamennais had still at this juncture ardent admirers and friends never more dear, but the shadow of final separation was already creeping in between them; and of this most tragic passage of a tragic life Maurice de Guérin was a sympathising witness. His generous disposition had made him a warm partisan of the distinguished master whose reputation had attracted him from the south, though when first introduced into his presence the nervous shyness of the young proselyte almost overcame him; but the accost of M. de Lamennais set him soon at ease. He received him like a son, and opened the conversation by asking, ‘What sort of weather is it habitually with you?’ then passed on to talk familiarly of Maurice’s journey, his companions on it, the high tides of St. Malo, Calderon, oyster-fishing, Victor Hugo, and poetry.

He was dressed from head to foot in coarse grey cloth—a little man, lean, pale, with sparkling eyes, a sloping head, a large long nose, and a brow furrowed with deep lines and wrinkles.

The Abbé Lacordaire and the Abbé Gerbet, who were at La Chênaie when Maurice arrived, welcomed him with the same paternal cordiality as the chief; and then, without more ado, he was sent into *retreat* for three days, as a prelude to the life of voluntary submission into which he sought to be initiated. There were but four pupils, and the rule of the house in all seasons was to rise at five, to dine at noon, to sup at eight, to bed at ten. Prayer and meditation were the first duties of the morning; then mass, followed by study until the mid-day meal, and after it, recreation for an hour and a half; then study again until the evening reading, which the young disciples took each by turn for a week. This exercise concluded with prayers in the chapel, which was situated in the garden at the end of the lime-tree avenue, and the psalms chanted in parts. When Maurice de Guérin and Élie de Kertanguy sang, it was a delight to hear them, of which Lamennais never wearied.

After supper all the family—master, guests, and pupils—assembled together in the old-fashioned sitting-room for chess, draughts, tric-trac, and talk. This was the hour of the day when formality and etiquette were laid aside, when all were on a level, and everyone was at his cheerfulest and best.

M. Féli, as the master was called in the familiar life of the house, was father-confessor to his young disciples, and a more benignant father could not be. Every Saturday they sought him in the sanctuary; he let them say their say, and when they had made an end, he took up the moral with grave, serious, luminous speech, blended full of Holy Scripture. The confession of Saturday was usually followed by communion on Sunday, and the parish church being too far off, the services were celebrated in the little private chapel, to which, when the fine weather came, they walked between two alleys of flowers. Each disciple was encouraged to pursue the line of study to which his peculiar talent inclined him, the end and aim of their study being always the same—the knowledge and love of God. The majority of those who

came to La Chênaie were preparing for the priesthood, but where the vocation of any was uncertain, as in the case of Maurice de Guérin, he was left at liberty to discover it—only work and prayer were necessities, both as rules of the order and as defences against the dulness of the place, where, without any figure of speech (Maurice wrote to Eugénie), they heard nothing but the winds whistling through the woods, and saw nothing but the clouds flying over the sky.

The most stirring events were the coming and going of those friends of Lamennais who still sought his society at intervals for the help and comfort that are to be found in the conversation of a man of genius who is also a good Christian. When Maurice had been at La Chênaie about a week, there was another arrival—François du Breil de Marzan—who made it his station for a fortnight every other month. That evening Lamennais, buried as usual in the depths of a vast thread-bare crimson velvet sofa, talked over the incidents of his recent pilgrimage to Rome in the whimsical, sarcastic strain that he indulged with his intimates. M. Gerbet put in, now and then, a

mildly qualifying word; Élie de Kertanguy, the master's favourite and most faithful disciple, added his voice; and the rest chimed in sometimes with noisy applause and laughter. Only Maurice held himself aloof—shy, reserved, observant—too fastidious and proudly timid to speak, lest he should speak amiss. The new-comer, himself a poet and sensitive, was attracted by this attitude of the southern-eyed stranger, whose countenance was expressive of thought and suffering. Élie de Kertanguy explained who he was, and before the same hour of the next day the two poets had exchanged confidences. Maurice had found a sympathetic friend, and when the visit of François came to a close, they knew all each other's vagaries and tender secrets, and had agreed to keep up their intimacy by a regular correspondence.

But it was Élie de Kertanguy himself who exercised most sway over the plastic temperament of Maurice. Élie was a Breton like Lamennais, a handsome, accomplished young man, of a firm and loyal character, on which Maurice could lean and rely. He loved and admired him, and often sought his society in the hours of recreation—so he told

Eugénie. 'It is with him I talk most, because we have much the same turn of thought; only, he has a good head which I have not, a solid mind which I have not, a wisdom of imagination which I have not. What is there, then, left of likeness between us? There is left the likeness between a drop of troubled water and a drop of clear water.'

The comfort of such a friend was no doubt very great, but there are signs that Élie's influence was almost too strong for the development of that moral independence of which Maurice confessedly stood in need. While young, he was always more or less in danger of making himself an echo, and of adopting other men's opinions as his own; and François du Breil de Marzan, who detected this weakness, charged him with adopting Élie's enthusiastic devotion for their master, which he himself did not share. But if this devotion was not the genuine product of Maurice's own feelings, he, at least, had sympathy to discern and appreciate the pathetic side of Lamennais' life, as is evident from the incidents that he has recorded of him in his journal and correspondence.

‘M. Féli is a man admirable to study in the recesses of his character: very different to so many men of great name, who are only good to study in their books, like spiders and silkworms, which spin marvellous webs, but are ugly little creatures. The more we see of M. Féli, the further we advance in his intimacy, the more frequently do we encounter those spiritual beauties and perfections which are imperceptible at a distance, and only reveal themselves in the familiarity of daily life. He is generally believed to be a proud man, passionately proud; but this opinion, which has turned many Catholics away from him, is incredibly false. There is not a man in the world more given to humility and self-renunciation. His life is a life of devotion and sacrifice to the mission that he has received, to pave the way for the future. What people have taken for the pride of the man, is but the intrepidity of the apostle. His mission is so hard and costs him so much, that he would be mad indeed to embrace it, were it only for fame; for, verily, it is a faggot of thorns that he clasps to his breast.

‘Elie came to me much disturbed, the tears in his eyes. “What is the matter?” “M. Féli has alarmed me.” “How?” “He was sitting behind the chapel under the two Scotch firs; he took his stick and drew a grave upon the grass, and said to me, ‘It is there that I would lie—no tombstone, only a simple mound of earth. Oh! how well I shall be there!’ I thought he was ill, and foresaw his death at hand. But it is not the first time that he has been agitated by presentiments; he said to us when he was setting out for Rome, ‘I do not count on seeing you again: do the good that I have not been able to do.’” He is impatient to die. This world is so miserable for Christian souls, and, above all, for a Christian soul like his.

“Do you know,” said M. Féli to us the evening before last, “why man is the most suffering of creatures? It is because he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite, and that he is torn asunder, not by wild horses, as in the horrible old times, but between two worlds.”

‘Hearing the clock strike, he said to us again, “If that clock knew that it would be destroyed in

an instant, it would not the less go on striking the hour until that instant arrived. My children, be like the clock; whatever is to happen, strike always your hour.” ’

II

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN had brought with him to Brittany much secret unhappiness and unrest, but the exaltation which had enabled him to break with the world sustained him for a while, and the tranquillity of his refuge soothed and consoled him. M. de Lamennais set him to work at Greek, English, German, and the philosophy of religion; and between hard study and frequent religious exercises he achieved a measure of content which made him always look back to La Chênaie as an Eden on earth, where he had breathed a twofold peace—the peace of solitude and the peace of God. His letters to his dear sister Eugénie expressed this content, and she wrote to Louise, at the beginning of the new year, that he was as happy in Brittany as a soul in Paradise.

The young poet had now abundant leisure and opportunity for the study and contemplation of

Nature, in which he delighted. In the long monotony of the dark days his journal was a vast resource to him, and there the passing of winter and coming on of spring are depicted with exquisite feeling, minuteness, and grace. The vacillations and revolutions of his inner life have also their record in its pages, as well as the external circumstances which nourished his genius to maturity. This journal, famous amongst his friends as his 'Green Note-book,' is the capital piece of the single volume which comprehends all his writings. It is full of a sad human interest, and we shall henceforward quote occasionally from it at length, for the story of the years that it covers.

'*March 3.*—I began to write in this note-book on the 10th of July, 1832, and I have returned to it only at long intervals. These eight months have been passed in the bitterest anguish of mind. I have written little because my powers have been almost annihilated. If pain had but left my intelligence free, I might have collected some very curious observations on moral suffering; but I was stunned by grief. I think the spring will do me

good. As the sun ascends and vital heat spreads through Nature, the strain of sorrow loses its force; I feel it relaxing, and my spirit, for a long while bound and almost stifled, draws a deep, full breath, and expands at its release.

‘To-day has enchanted me. For the first time this ever so long, the sun has shown itself in all its beauty. The buds of the leaves and flowers begin to swell under its influence, and in my bosom it has awakened a thousand happy thoughts.

‘The clouds assume more and more their light and graceful forms, and fly, sketching over the blue the most charming caprices. The woods are leafless yet, but they are putting on an indescribable air of life and gaiety, which gives them quite a new physiognomy. Everything is preparing for the great festival of Nature.

‘*The 6th.*—Élie and I have had a long talk. We are agreed on the necessity, the indispensable law which lies upon each one of us to fulfil his social mission, however narrow, however obscure it may be. We owe all to the common good, not only the sacrifice of our passions, but also the sacrifice of our innocent tastes, of our individual projects

of happiness, if that happiness would be idle and useless to our fellow-creatures. We have cast a look, too, on that life, so sweet, so peaceful, which hides itself within the pale of the family; but it was a look of sacrifice, resolved as we are to choose our place, there where we may do the most good.

‘This conversation has re-animated my weak and wavering courage, and filled my heart with a strange comfort.

‘*The 8th.*—A day of snow. A storm from the south-east drives it in great whirlwinds and waterspouts of dazzling whiteness. It melts as it falls. Behold us, back in the depths of winter, after a smile or two of spring. The wind is very cold; the little singing-birds that have ventured out shiver, and the flowers shiver too. The windows and wainscots creak and groan as if it were January; and as for me, I shut myself up in my poor covering even as Nature does.

‘*The 9th.*—Still snow, showers of hail, blasts of wind, and cold. Poor Brittany, thou hast need of a little green to gladden thy sombre countenance. Oh! throw me by thy winter-cloak, and don me

thy mantle of spring, a tissue of leaves and flowers. When shall I see the skirts of thy robe floating free at the will of the winds?

‘*The 11th.*—It has snowed all night. Through the chinks of my shutters the moment I rose, I caught a glimpse of the great white sheet that had spread itself in silence over the country. The black trunks of the trees rise like pillars of ebony from a pavement of ivory. We hear nothing; not a living thing but a few sparrows, squabbling as they fly for shelter to the firs which stretch out their long arms laden with snow. The frost cannot reach them in the dense covert of these trees; it is a sanctuary prepared by God, and the little birds know it.

‘I have been to look at our primroses; each of them had its tiny load of snow, and drooped its head under the burden. The pretty, gay-coloured flowers had a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw whole tufts of them roofed over by a single block of snow. All these laughing blossoms thus shrouded and leaning one upon another, seemed like a group of little girls surprised by a shower, and taking shelter under a white apron.

'The 19th.—A walk in the forest of Coëtquen. We came upon a spot singular for its wildness. The path plunges down abruptly into a narrow ravine, where a brook runs over a bed of slate, which gives its waters a dusky shade, disagreeable at first, but which ceases to be so when one has observed how it harmonises with the black trunks of the oaks, the dark green of the ivies, and its contrast with the silver and lissom stems of the birch-trees. A great wind from the north rolled through the forest and woke its voices of thunder. The trees fought furiously together under the tempestuous blasts. We saw through the branches clouds flying swiftly in black weird masses, which seemed to sweep the tops of the trees. Through the rents in this vast and sombre-flowing veil pierced, now and then, a ray of sun, which flashed like lightning into the heart of the forest. These sudden gleams of splendour into the depths of majestic gloom, had a strange and haggard effect, like a laugh on the lips of the dead.

'The 29th.—Winter goes its way laughing. Yesterday, we walked farther than usual. M. Gerbet, Mermet, and I made an excursion towards

the north, as far as the heights of St. Helen. It is a sort of terrace, whence the view extends over a vast horizon, gloomy and monotonous, to the south and east. On the north rise the cliffs of the ocean, describing a long line, straight and blue. A little to the north-east, thanks to a break in the hills, we had a glimpse of the Bay of Cancale. The waves, smitten by the sun, shone in a luminous bar, which enabled us to distinguish them from the coast of Normandy. Down in the west we saw Dinan, with its tall spires half hidden by those vapours which hang over cities in the distance of the plains. In the same direction, the white country houses stood out against a dark background, each invariably accompanied by a knot of firs, which looked like black giants keeping guard over the domestic hearth. At intervals, all round the horizon rose the church steeples like the towers of that immense rampart. I am delighted with this walk for having opened to me this grand panorama, but, above all, for having given me a glimpse of the sea.

‘*April 5 (Good Friday).*—A day beautiful as heart’s desire! Clouds, but only enough to make

a landscape in the sky. They take more and more their summer forms. Their scattered groups lie motionless under the sun like flocks of sheep in the pastures when it is very hot. I have seen a swallow, and have heard the bees humming over the flowers. Sitting in the sunshine to warm me to the core with the divine spring, I felt again some of my childish impressions: for a moment I considered the heaven with its clouds, the earth with its woods, its songs, its murmurs, as I did then. This renewal of the first aspect of things is, to my mind, one of the sweetest reactions of childhood in the course of life.

‘My God! what is my soul about, betaking itself to these fugitive pleasures on Good Friday, on this day consecrated to Thy death and our redemption? I am possessed by I know not what damnable spirit, which rouses my loathing and urges me to revolt against the holy exercises and devout meditations which are meet to prepare us for the great solemnities of our faith. We have been two days in retirement, and I only feel the time lie heavy on my hands, and fret and embitter myself even against the discipline of the retreat.

Oh ! how well can I trace here the old leaven, of which I have not yet thoroughly cleansed my heart !

‘*April 25.*—It has just done raining. Nature is blooming, radiant ; the earth seems to drink in with delight the waters that give her life. One might fancy that the throats of the birds were refreshed by it too ; their song is purer, clearer, more brilliant, and vibrates wonderfully in the sonorous, echoing air. Nightingales, finches, blackbirds, wrens, thrushes, all sing and rejoice. A goose screaming like a trumpet, adds to the charm by contrast. The motionless trees seem to listen to these noises. In the distance, innumerable apple-trees sheeted with blossom look like balls of snow, and the cherry-trees, white, too, rise into pyramids, or spread themselves out in fans of flowers.

‘*May 3.*—A day of rejoicing, full of sunshine and sweet air, and in my soul felicity. One can almost see the leaves grow ; the green has shot from the garden into the shrubberies, and reigns all along the mere ; it darts from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, over the fields and over the

hill-sides, and I can see that it has already gained the forest, and begins to cover its broad flanks. Soon it will have overflowed far as the eye can reach, and all the vast expanse that the horizon encloses will wave and resound like a sea—a sea of emerald. A few days more, and we shall have all the pomp and show of the vegetable kingdom.

‘*The 9th.*—Five or six days without the shadow of a cloud. The development of the verdure is accomplished. Nature has put on all her ornaments. She is in the perfection of her bloom, purity, and grace, and we must make haste to seize it, for it passes quickly. La Chênaie reminds me of a very grey, wrinkled old woman, restored by the touch of a fairy’s wand to the gracious loveliness of a girl of sixteen. It has all the freshness, all the radiance, all the mysterious charm of virginity. But how short a time it will last! The leaves that opened yesterday are tender as dew, and of a transparent greenness, but M. Féli showed us some amongst them already pierced and crenated by the insects.’

III

THE spring was come, but Maurice de Guérin's content was fretted, like the leaves, by the gnat-swarm of his old griefs and temptations. While the winter kept him to his books, he had been patient enough ; the effort that had torn him from the world continued for some months to sustain him, but now that the fit of exaltation was over, he began to droop and languish in the monotony of La Chênaie. His recollections, his regrets, took hold on the veriest trifles. Tender visions of Rayssac haunted the beechwood that he saw from his window ; and when he rested under its silken shadow, his heart was sick for Louise. She visited his dreams, and her voice, 'silver-sweet sounding,' thrilled through the hollow aisles of sleep. He had days of intense misery and depression, under which he lay weak, helpless, able only to pray and wait for their passing. The most beneficent remedies failed of their effect, and gentle counsels touching his wounds, to heal them, only quickened in him a vibration of all his sufferings past.

From these periods of gloom he emerged utterly

exhausted, and more than ever sensible of some organic defect of moral power in him. His timid, anxious, analytical element left him no repose. He vexed himself with the insufficiency of his previous studies, and with his present slow progress in knowledge—calling it rather a torment than a progress. His mind, even at his work, was never free from disquieting pre-occupations; and, eager as he was to learn, sharply as the spur of genius goaded him, his advance appeared to himself a laggard and creeping motion. His self-love also sustained some poignant mortifications, which deepened his sense of inward poverty. His exquisite talent was not discerned by the critics at La Chênaie, and his elusive, dreamy temperament earned him more compassion than sympathy from the great master in whose teaching he sought light and strength. Thus discouraged where he looked for help, he began to despair of any good ever coming out of him to satisfy the expectations of those whom he loved and who loved him. He distressed and disappointed them, and he felt that as his worst misfortune.

But if the fine weather brought in its train

remorseful memories of loss and waste, it brought also many agreeable distractions for thought, of which Maurice not unwillingly availed himself. As the beautiful season advanced, the visitors to La Chênaie multiplied. M. de Montalembert and M. de St. Beuve, the most distinguished of French critics, were amongst the summer guests, and more than once Maurice's new friend, François du Breil de Marzan, returned for a fortnight, when they compared notes on their poetical compositions. Now and then, but not often, the young students dined at a neighbour's house, where the cordial welcome and simple hospitality reminded Maurice of the receptions at Le Cayla; and occasionally they extended their walks to Dinan and other interesting localities, to fine points of view on the hills, and even as far as the coast.

All these things made Maurice happy for the moment, but for the moment only. His moods would seem, indeed, to have been as variable as the weather, and in an extraordinary degree influenced by it. Nothing, for instance, could be gayer than the temper in which he set out, with sunshine and breeze, on an excursion for a couple

of days to St. Malo. His companion was Edmund de Cazalés, one of his former colleagues on the *European Review*, who had come to La Chênaie in the pleasant month of April. It was a twenty-miles' walk, but they were so delighted to find themselves on their way to the sea, that they took no thought for the length of the road. Cazalés had made a pedestrian tour in Switzerland and the south of Germany the summer before, and talked with enthusiasm of the beautiful lakes and lofty mountains. He also extolled the fashion of travelling on foot, as they were doing.

'In this humble style,' said he, 'the traveller mixes with the people; he goes into the inns to rest or refresh himself; he sleeps in cottages; he accosts other travellers like himself; and these chance meetings in the dust of the highways sometimes bring about touching confidences.'

At the village of Châteauneuf a charming prospect opened to the tourists. On one side, the north-west, the hills ascended in terraces covered with wood, and the Rance, flowing full, glittered like a mirror in the sunshine; in the east, a well-cultivated plain stretched to the horizon. This

fine spectacle led their conversation to the study and adoration of Nature, and Maurice had the great joy of hearing Cazalés express precisely his own sentiments about it. They then went on to talk of their inner struggles and their manner of looking at life, until the talk by degrees worked round to love and poets. Discourse of Lamartine, Nodier, and Hugo brought them within view of St. Malo a little after sunset.

What struck them first was a line of ships whose enormous hulls were barely distinguishable in the gloom, though their masts and cordage showed like fine tracery against the evening light of the sky. Beyond these ships was a dark mass encircled by ramparts—St. Malo upon its rock, a true nest of sea-birds ; and farther still, though they could see nothing, a grand monotonous voice—the Ocean. They reached the town by the beach, thanks to the low tide, and stopped at an inn, from which they looked out on the sea ; and for the first time in his life Maurice de Guérin fell asleep to the lullaby of the waves, breaking on the shore not two hundred paces from his bed.

The two young men returned by boat up the

Rance to Dinan on the morrow, and finished their journey home on foot, arriving there towards night-fall, tired in body but happy in mind. Yet less than a week after Maurice was deploring himself in a fresh paroxysm of moral anguish. A letter from Eugénie, which came to him at the worst, did him much good ; but the summer sky was all grey with storm, and while the sun hid behind the clouds, his own joy and peace were ever in eclipse. He makes his journal his confidant.

‘June 13.—But for the verdure we might be in December. The fine weather is gone, I know not where. The sun has lost its power, and it is shivering cold. This confounded west wind has invaded heaven with innumerable legions of clouds, and deluges us with rain. It looks like winter passing overhead with its mournful retinue. Nothing more depressing than this contrast of the green earth, of this wonderfully-wrought carpet which Spring has spread for her beautiful feet, and the heavenly vault all darkened with clouds of rain. It makes me think of a wedding in a church hung with black. What a

difference even on the finest day between this sky of Brittany and our sky of the south! Here the summer, even on its high-days and holy-days, has always something of sad, shrouded, stinted. It is like a miser making a show—there is meanness in his magnificence. Give me our Languedoc sky, so generous of light, so blue, so largely vaulted.

‘*The 23rd.*—“I know that I am a poor creature who has little ability.” Oh! how well is that said, my dear Bernardin! How well have you expressed the feelings of a mind urged to rise above its sphere, and which, penetrated with a sense of its powerlessness, exclaims, “I know that I am a poor creature!” as you have made Virginie say. For a very long while have I been repeating those words to myself; they are the epitome of all my labours, of all my life. Oh! if I were poor in one way only, no matter; but it is that my poverty is almost universal, yes, universal, and that I shall never produce any great thing, not for myself, but for those who have a right to look for it from me. That is what so distresses me. I have mistaken my way. I might have been able to do something useful in a quite

opposite path. It is impossible to push my experiments further than I have done. That which I am on the way to accomplish will never answer. And after it who can say what will befall me? The invisible thread of Providence will draw me always to the better side.'

IV

'*The invisible thread of Providence will draw me always to the better side,*' said Maurice de Guérin, and let himself drift by it. He had seen enough of La Chênaie before summer was on the wane to convince him that his mobile spirit would never conform itself happily to the narrow rule of the religious life, but he had not nerve to emancipate himself from the firm ascendancy of those who were endeavouring to mould him to it. He gave his mind, on the contrary, with an effort of goodwill, to self-examination and other exercises necessary to prepare him for his vows, striving like a sinner newly converted to love what he abhorred, and to abhor what he loved. He solemnly renounced poetry, reverie, and all his ideal life; he

tried to banish the fair phantom that haunted his imagination, and to keep his vagrant thoughts with a short tether ; but in the unnatural effort his soul fell into a sort of frozen paralysis, indifference to everything, a thousand times more painful than the acutest sensibility.

As the period drew near when he must make up his mind on his whole future life, he narrowly scrutinised his inner man in quest of his true calling ; but either he sought amiss or God refused to bless his efforts, for they were labour lost. In the investigation he came upon some memories still living that he had fancied dead, some names that he had thought effaced, and many relics of his old nature that he had believed clean cast out of him ; he found also some desires to live for God, a little store of pious sentiments, and a wish to do right, but of religious vocation not a trace.

Perhaps the only real gift for it that he had ever possessed was the gift of preaching—that gift which, as a boy, he used to exercise for his sisters' edification from the sylvan pulpit of St. Chrysostom in the oak-wood at Le Cayla. When it was his week to take the evening readings and to enlarge

upon the subject with such reflections as taste or devotion might suggest, his co-disciples found as great delight in hearing him as Lamennais found in his sweet chanting of the psalms with Élie de Kertanguy. Amongst his favourite books were the Sermons of Saint François de Sales, his 'Treatise of the Love of God,' and the 'Letters and Meditations' of St. Theresa; and while reading and interpreting them, he was no longer the timid, almost awkward young man he appeared in the sitting-room circle, but a poet and pious, deep thinker, who spoke with the same fervour and effusion as the saintly writers whose outpourings of heart roused all the echoes of his own.

While still involved in mazes of perplexity and indecision, he went on a visit to François du Breil de Marzan at La Brousse, and then for a week to another habitué of La Chênaie, M. Hippolyte de la Morvonnois, a poet, married to a sweet wife, a cousin of M. de Lamennais, whose home was in the lovely valley of the Arguénon, near the sea. During this visit to Le Val, Maurice let care go, and gave himself up to pure enjoyment. Morvonnois was an enthusiastic admirer of Wordsworth,

and had even made a pilgrimage to Rydal Mount to see him. He related his long journey; and the two poets discussed their brother at the English Lakes, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, and other heroes of Parnassus, like men who knew and loved them.

But this enchanting episode was soon over. Maurice returned to La Chênaie at the end of August, and then the necessity of coming to a conclusion on his future course could no longer be delayed or avoided. He went through a few cruel days of inward struggle, and finished the conflict by taking the initiatory vows of the order that M. de Lamennais had founded.

Then for a while calm fell on him, or torpor. His father was content with what he had done. Eugénie's pious heart sang over him for joy. But at this very moment, when all seemed settled past recall, circumstances were preparing for the weak-willed disciple the release that he had not the energy to effect for himself. Fresh persecutions had risen against M. de Lamennais. His teaching had long fallen into suspicion with the most orthodox; and the Bishop of Rennes, in the exercise of

his episcopal function, commanded him to discontinue it, and to transfer the novices under his care to the house of the Brothers of Christian Instruction at Ploërmel. It was on the 7th of September that their removal took place; Élie de Kertanguy alone remaining behind, determined to stick to the great master in all fortunes. Maurice de Guérin went his way reluctantly with the rest, and he found nothing at Ploërmel to reconcile him to the change. It was a dreary old turreted cloister, where the rule of passive obedience was in full force, and where no presiding genius alleviated the tedium of solitude. He might have abided in peace for long in the pleasant shades of La Chênaie—for so long that he would have felt no desire ever to quit them; but at this rude awakening to the bald reality of monasticism, his manhood started up in desperate revulsion, and he protested that he would rather run all the risks of a life of adventure than suffer himself to be bound hand and foot by a rule.

This protest was conclusive of his destiny. A new edict from the bishop dismissed the secular members of the congregation, and Maurice de

Guérin was free to go back to the world when he would. His heart contracted at the prospect, but better that, with all its hardships, struggles, dangers, than the moral and intellectual suicide of Ploërmel. He wrote to François du Breil de Marzan about it in a very protestant temper, and was not afraid to announce himself Lamennais' partisan in his new quarrel. Old-fashioned folk may blame the apostle of the future for replying to the Pope that *what his conscience permits that he will do*, but Maurice cannot blame him; and when the Bishop of St. Brieux preached a frantic tirade against him at Dinan, Maurice waxed incautiously fierce in his defence: 'The Lord is up and will plead his cause, the cause of nations, and all the advocates of slavery will be put to confusion. I suffer for what M. Féli suffers, but I have no fear for the issue of our great trial. Though the Pope should condemn him, is there not in Heaven a Court of Appeal? We are in good heart; our Samson has long hair, and Rome shall not lull him asleep on her knees.'

Maurice was not compelled to quit Ploërmel at once; a month's grace was allowed him to seek another shelter; but the re-expansion of his fancy

was simultaneous with his assurance of a return to active life. With a lively effusion of joy he took back to his heart poetry, dreams, sweet reveries ; and gazing out from his window into the twilight mists round the old convent, he imagined that he saw again the flutter of a certain blue dress that Louise wore when he was at Rayssac. The vision of her, no longer forbidden, flitted like a blue bird across the evening shadows, and the silvery echo of her voice filled the air with remembered music. Whatever Maurice's shrinking from the world, and the material difficulties that awaited him there, it is impossible not to see that he was more glad than sorry to plume his wings for another flight ; for the mere anticipation of it set his genius free to sing, and in the interval before its realisation he sang his best and happiest strains. It was in the dismal tower of Ploërmel, in dismal November, that he wrote the loveliest of all his poems, addressing it to his two poetical friends, Hippolyte and François, and filling it with tender pictures of Le Cayla and his sisters, of Louise and her eyrie in the mountains.

His existence being now again to seek, his

thoughts turned naturally to Paris and the seductive paths of literature. He applied first for admission to the Collège Juilly, there to roost while he tried his strength, but his application was disregarded—a neglect which he laid to the account of his being a lamb of Lamennais' flock, and tainted, perhaps, with his heresies. But his month's grace at Ploërmel having expired while he was still casting about amongst his friends for where he should find a foothold in the world, he went again to the charming home of M. de la Morvonnais at Le Val. This visit, one of the happiest, most beautiful passages in his life, we shall leave almost entirely to his own telling.

V

'LE VAL.

'*December 7.*—After a year of perfect calm, inner tempests excepted, of which I must not accuse solitude, for that wrapt me in such peace and silence that a less unquiet soul than mine would have gone deliciously to sleep—after a year of unbroken calm, Fortune, who had allowed me to

enter the holy house to take a little rest, has knocked at the door to call me; for she did not go on her way, but sat down by the threshold to wait until I had recovered strength to continue my journey. "Thy halt has been long enough," said she; "come, let us be going." And she has taken me by the hand, like those poor women we meet in the roads, leading a child, who follows them with a disconsolate air. But what folly in me to fret! Are there no griefs in the world for me to water with tears but my own? I will say henceforth to their fountain, "Be dry;" and to God, "Lord, hear not my complaints," whenever I am tempted to invoke His name and to weep for myself; for it is good that I suffer, I, who can purchase nothing in heaven by the merit of my actions, and shall gain nothing there but by virtue of suffering, like all feeble souls.

'And see how full of loving-kindness Providence is for me! Lest the sudden passage from the mild and tempered air of the religious life to the torrid clime of the world should be too trying for my soul, it has led me, at leaving my sacred shelter, to a dwelling on the frontier between the

two regions, where, without being in solitude, one is not in the world ; a dwelling where the windows open on one side towards the plain where rocks the tumult of men, and on the other towards the wilderness where sing the servants of God. I will record here the history of my sojourn, for the days spent under this roof are full of happiness ; and I know that in the time to come, I shall often like to turn back the pages and read of my past felicities. A man pious and a poet ; a wife whose spirit is tuned to such perfect sympathy with his, that they seem to have but one being ; a child called Marie, like her mother, whose first rays of love and intelligence pierce star-like through the white cloud of infancy ; a simple life in an old-fashioned house ; the ocean, which night and morning brings us its harmonies ; and, lastly, a wanderer, who has come down from Carmel and is going on to Babylon, and who has laid by his staff and sandals at this threshold, to take his seat at the hospitable board : —here is a matter to make a Biblical poem of, if I could only describe things as well as I feel them.

‘ *The 8th.*—Yesterday the west wind blew furi-

ously. I have seen the ocean raging, but, sublime as it may be, this tumult is far from equalling, to my mind, the pageant of the sea when it is still and blue. But why assert that one is grander than the other? Who can measure these two sublimities, and say, "The second surpasses the first"? Let us say only, "My soul delights itself more in calm than in storm."

'Yesterday there was a great battle in the watery plains. To see how the waves bounded, one might have said they were clouds of Tartar horsemen, restlessly galloping over the steppes of Asia. The mouth of the bay is barred by a chain of granite islets: it was glorious to see how the billows rushed to the assault, and madly flung themselves with frightful clamours against the reef; it was glorious to see them take their start, and strive who should best surmount the black heads of the rocks. The boldest or most agile leapt over with a great shout; others, heavier or more awkward, broke themselves against the bar in foam of dazzling whiteness, and retired with a deep hollow rumbling, like mastiffs driven back by a traveller's stick.

'We witnessed these strange contests from a steep cliff, where we could hardly stand against the shocks of the wind. The vast uproar of the sea, the blustering race of the waves, the silent but not less swift flight of the clouds, the sea-birds floating high in heaven, their slender bodies balanced between two curved wings of prodigious outstretch—all this unison of wild harmonies met in the souls of two beings on the edge of the cliff, shaken like two leaves by the mighty wind, and in that immensity no more apparent than two birds perched on a clod of earth. Oh! it was something wonderful and admirable, one of those moments of sublime agitation and profound reverie together, when the soul of Man and Nature rise up to their full height, and confront each other.

'From the cliffs we descended into a narrow gorge which opens a sea-retreat, such as the old poets knew well how to describe, for a few tranquil waves that flow murmuring in to sleep there, while their insensate brothers beat the rocks, and strive amongst themselves. Enormous boulders of grey granite pied with white mosses, are strewn

in confusion on the slope of the hill, which encloses this little bay in the hollow of its foot. So strangely do they lie, leaning towards the descent, that one might fancy a giant had amused himself one day by rolling them from the top of the cliff, and that they had stopped wherever they encountered an obstacle, some not far from where they started, others half-way down—only they seem rather halting than arrested, or rather they seem to be still rolling. The roar of the winds and waves ingulging itself in this sonorous nook, creates the finest harmonies. We took a long rest there, leaning on our sticks, and all amazed.

‘*The 9th.*—The moon was still shining with a few stars when the bell called us to mass. I like this morning mass that is said between the last glimmer of the stars and the first rays of the sun.

‘In the evening, Hippolyte and I walked along the cliffs. We wanted to see how the ocean looks towards the close of a still grey day in December. The fog hid the distance of the waters, but gave expanse enough to view to let us imagine the infinite. We took up our post at a point where a coast-guardsmen has his hut, and set our backs

to the wall. A wood on the slope of the hill to the right spread out in the pale haze its bare and slender branches, through which went the wind softly moaning. To the left, far off, the tower of the Ébihens now half vanished, as if drowned in shadows, then reappeared with a faint gleam on its front, when a furtive ray of the twilight succeeded in cheating the clouds. The sound of the sea was low and dreamy as in the finest days, but with something more plaintive in its tone. Our ear followed this sound, which sighed all along the coast, and we only drew breath when the surge that poured it forth retreated to make way for the succeeding wave. It is, I think, from the grave deep voice of the wave breaking into foam, and the light rustling sound of the water on the shingle and shells as it ebbs, that proceeds the extraordinary thrill in the song of the sea. But why analyse this music? I can never say anything to express it. Let us go back to the sentiment of it.

‘The gloom thickened around us, but we did not dream of returning, for the concords of the sea grew louder as all became silent on land, and

the Night revealed her mysteries. Like those statues which the ancients set upon their promontories, we remained motionless, fascinated, enchained by the charm of the Ocean and the Night. We gave no sign of life but by looking up when we heard the whirl of the wild ducks overhead.

‘The course of my wandering fortunes had brought me to a lovely Cape of Brittany to dream away a winter evening. There were silent for some hours all those inward voices that have never been quite still since the first tempest arose in my heart. There, all the sweet and heavenly melancholies entered into my soul with the music of the ocean, and my spirit strayed as in a paradise of dreams. Oh! when I have left Le Val, when I have shed my tears of farewell in the bosom of its friendship, when I am in Paris, where there is no Val and no ocean, when I am alone with my sadness, and my mind inclines to despair, oh! how shall I weep at the remembrance of our evenings! for happiness is the soft fine rain that penetrates the heart, but springs again in fountains of tears.

‘*The 20th.* — Never before have I tasted so

nearly and contemplatively the bliss of the family life. Never before has the influence of a pious and happy home so completely surrounded me. It is like a cloud of invisible incense that I breathe. All the minute details of this life whose linked succession makes up the day, are to me so many phases of a continuous charm that goes on unfolding itself from dawn till dark.

‘The morning greeting, that in a manner renews the pleasure of the first arrival—for the words we meet with are much the same—and the separation at night counterfeits longer separations, being, like them, full of dangers and uncertainties; then breakfast, the meal where we enjoy our coming together again; the walk afterwards, when we go out to bid Nature good-morrow; our return, and our setting to work in an old-fashioned panelled chamber looking out on the sea, inaccessible to the stir of the house—a perfect sanctuary of labour; dinner, to which we are summoned, not by a bell, but by a pleasant voice; the gaiety, the merriment, the lively, airy talk, flitting hither and thither, and never flagging so long as the meal lasts; the crackling fire of dry branches

round which we make haste to draw our chairs directly after; the kind words spoken by the flame that sings as we talk; then, if the sun is shining, the stroll along the beach, where the waves see coming to them a mother with a child in her arms, the father of the child, and a stranger; the rosy lips of the little girl prattling at the same time as the waves; now and then, tears that she sheds, and baby-terrors at the edge of the sea; thoughts of our own—the father's and mine—as we watch the mother and child smiling one at the other, or the child in tears, and the mother trying to comfort her with tender voice and caresses; the Ocean all the while rolling up his billows and noises; the dead boughs that we go and cut here and there in the copse-wood to kindle a quick, brisk fire when we get home—this bit of woodman's work that brings us nearer to Nature, and reminds us of M. Féli's eager delight in it; the hours of study and poetical flow that carry us to supper-time—this meal which calls us by the same gentle voice and passes with the same cheerfulness as dinner, only less loud, because evening sobers everything, tones everything

down; then the evening ushered in by the blaze of a glorious fire, which, with reading and talking, brings us at last to sleep: to all the charms of a day thus spent add the dreams of imagination, and you will still be far from conceiving the true measure of these home felicities.

‘*The 23rd.*—For some days the weather has been at the worst. The rain falls, and the wind blows in sudden gusts, of such fury, that it seems as if everything must fall a prey to the terrific hail-showers. Three nights running have I been woke up with a start by one of these squalls, which pass regularly towards midnight. They drive against the house so violently that everything within it shakes and trembles. I raise myself in my bed and listen to the hurricane sweeping by, and a thousand thoughts that slept, some on the surface, others in the depths of my soul, bestir themselves and rise too.

‘All these noises of Nature: the winds, those formidable blasts of an unknown mouth, which bring into play the innumerable instruments ranged in the plains, on the mountains, in the hollows of the valleys and the recesses of the

thick forests; the waters which possess a scale of voice of unbounded compass, from the gurgle of a spring in the moss to the vast harmonies of the ocean; the thunder, the roar of that sea flowing over our heads; the rustle of the dry leaves, if a footstep or breeze passes upon them; in short—for one must needs stop in an enumeration that has no end—the constant emission of sound, the rumours of the elements always in motion, fill my mind with new bewilderments and reveries from which I cannot escape. The voice of Nature has obtained such an empire over me, that I can rarely succeed in disengaging my thoughts from the pre-occupation that she imposes, and in vain I try to turn her a deaf ear. But to awake at midnight to the cries of the storm, to be assailed in the darkness by a wild and savage music which overthrows the dominion of Night, is a thing incomparable for weird impressions; it is the very luxury of terror.'

VI

CHRISTMAS was come, but Maurice de Guérin was still without any prospect to which he could

betake himself in the hope of a living. All they knew of him at Le Cayla was that he had left La Chênaie and gone to Le Val, and that if he did not soon find an opening in Paris, he would be compelled of necessity to return to his father's house. Since they had heard this news of him, Eugénie never saw a horseman riding up the hill but her heart throbbed—and not with joy only. M. de Bayne, M. de Bories, and all their friends round Le Cayla, sided with Rome against M. de Lamennais; and what if Maurice should come home tinctured with his master's heresies!

But Maurice had no longing for home under present circumstances. The dependence of his position was growing more and more irksome to his sensitiveness. Twice he wrote from Le Val to M. Paul Quemper, a popular journalist, whose friendship he had acquired during his first visit there, to ask him if he could help him to a little breathing-place in the throng of men of letters, where he would not be too much knocked about; adding, that teaching in all its branches was invincibly repugnant to his tastes. While awaiting a reply, he accompanied M. de la Morvonnois and

thick forests; the voice of unbounded spring in the m ocean; the th over our hear footstep or for one has no ideas conceived of him by both rumc enemies, had made a plenary submi to the ecclesiastical authorities. This mission was evidently a grief and disappointment to Maurice, who thus records it in his journal:—

‘MORDREUX, January 2, 1834.

‘Night before last I thus closed a letter to Frédéric: “I write to you in the last hours of 1833. There is an inexpressible sadness in this agony of the dying year. My heart is full of strange and distressful thoughts, for the tempest roars without, and the year expires in the convulsions of a dark and stormy night.”

‘I suffered intensely all through that evening. The incredible rapidity of the flight of life, the

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 tion in his heart, and tears in his eyes. Poor M.
 Féli! You have often pressed me to your bosom,
 and my unworthy eyes have seen to the depths of
 your soul; for there were days when you became
 as transparent, as limpid as a spring of clear
 water. Oh! what grief possesses me to see you
 so misunderstood, and suffering so much persecu-
 tion for the good that it has been your desire to
 do! What man better than you can say to the
 Lord, “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me
 up”? and you are counted amongst those whom
 Satan sends to throw alarm into the Church of
 God.’

his wife to keep the festivals of Christmas and New Year with a large family of their kinsfolk at Mordreux, a village on the Rance, between St. Malo and La Chênaie; and thence one day he made a last pilgrimage to La Chênaie, deserted now by all but the old housekeeper and the house-dog.

M. de Lamennais had returned to Paris, and, contrary to the ideas conceived of him by both friends and enemies, had made a plenary submission to the ecclesiastical authorities. This submission was evidently a grief and disappointment to Maurice, who thus records it in his journal:—

‘MORDREUX, *January 2, 1834.*

‘Night before last I thus closed a letter to Frédéric: “I write to you in the last hours of 1833. There is an inexpressible sadness in this agony of the dying year. My heart is full of strange and distressful thoughts, for the tempest roars without, and the year expires in the convulsions of a dark and stormy night.”

‘I suffered intensely all through that evening. The incredible rapidity of the flight of life, the

mystery of our destinies, the awful questions that doubt at times addresses to men the best established in their belief, and finally that mood which often overtakes me, when the soul feels itself borne irresistibly towards regions of unutterable gloom—all these terrors laid hold on me at once. During the same evening I received confirmation of some news that had been rumoured several days—the defeat of a great man, who has yielded up his pen as soldiers yield their sword, indignation in his heart, and tears in his eyes. Poor M. Féli! You have often pressed me to your bosom, and my unworthy eyes have seen to the depths of your soul; for there were days when you became as transparent, as limpid as a spring of clear water. Oh! what grief possesses me to see you so misunderstood, and suffering so much persecution for the good that it has been your desire to do! What man better than you can say to the Lord, “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up”? and you are counted amongst those whom Satan sends to throw alarm into the Church of God.’

Another week elapsed, ten days, and still Maurice was at Mordreux, and still without a call to Paris, or to anywhere. But Mordreux was a delightful house; and though anxiety plucked at his heartstrings in secret, he wore a countenance of content, and with a tender consideration that he never forgot, made no murmurings in his letters to disquiet the peaceful souls at Le Cayla. He wrote to Eugénie of his visit charmingly:—

‘ TO MDLLE. EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN, AT LE CAYLA.

‘ MORDREUX, *January 10, 1834.*

‘ We left Le Val on Christmas Eve to keep the Feast and greet the New Year at the house of M. de la Villéon, the father-in-law of my friend. Do you not admire my lucky star, my dear? At the moment when I knew not whither to turn my steps, it began to move on before me, and goes leading me from pleasant home to pleasant home towards my unknown destiny. Why is Le Cayla so far off, and why have I but this miserable pen and ink to tell you a thousand charming things that would quite refresh you if I could tell you

them face to face? I do not think there is in the world a fairer sight, above all in this age of public confusion and upsetting, than the domestic life of a quiet and loving family. Oh! when one looks beyond it at affairs of State delivered into corrupt hands, liberty turned into deceit, faith become the servant of kings, all generous thought stifled, and the prophets slain as in Jerusalem between the porch and the altar; oh! how good it is to shut the door upon one's-self, and how precious is a single evening spent at a hospitable fireside! Here on every side are beaming faces, exquisite ease, simplicity of manners, and union of hearts worthy of the good old times. This family is like a beautiful tree, all the branches and leaves of which caress each other at the passing of the slightest chill. M. de la Villéon and papa would get on together admirably; for he also is an enthusiastic farmer, and I can fancy them like a couple of veterans, detailing their peaceful campaigns by the fireside. There are scenes here as at Le Cayla, when papa comes in of an evening tired and wet from his round in the fields. Hippolyte and I, who pass our lives amongst books, retreat

into a silent room to work at our ease, and sometimes to cast into verse this home-happiness, which naturally fills the mind with beautiful thoughts, or our impressions gathered on our walks; and in the evening, after supper, our poetic effusions take their place amongst our readings aloud together. Over all this life throw the enchantment, the poesy, the intoxicating atmosphere one breathes whenever young girls breathe the same air, and you will have, as through a cloud, a dim view of our paradise. I could go on for ever with this tender story, and I would fain forget that any other is left for me to tell, if it were possible to silence the memory of sorrowful things. . . .’

A few days after the despatch of this letter to Le Cayla, Maurice de Guérin returned with his friends to Le Val, and his journal continues the story of this charming episode of his life to the end.

VII

'LE VAL, January 20.

'I HAVE been three weeks at Mordreux, in the bosom of a family the most peaceful, most united, most blessed of Heaven, that can be imagined. And yet in that calm, in that sweet monotony of domestic life, my days were secretly disturbed, so that I do not believe I ever experienced such inquietude of heart and brain. An inexpressible tenderness took possession of all my being, and brought the tears into my eyes for a nothing, as happens to children and old men. My bosom swelled at every instant, and my soul overflowed in transports, in effusions of tears and words unutterable. A soft fatigue weighed upon my eyes, and, at times, oppressed my limbs. I could not eat, though I was hungry; for the bliss of my spirit communicated to my body such an inexplicable joy, that it revolted against an act that would have degraded its noble voluptuousness. I strove my utmost with this dangerous exaltation, this impetuosity of feeling, of which I knew the

peril; but I was too much overcome to save myself, and it would have been all over with me, if I had not found a strong diversion in the contemplation of Nature. I set myself to consider her even more attentively than usual, and by degrees the fermentation settled down; for there issued from the fields, the waves, the woods, a suave and beneficent virtue which penetrated me through, and turned my raptures to melancholy reveries. This fusion of the tranquil impressions of Nature with the stormy dreams of the heart, produces a disposition of mind that I would fain long preserve; for it is the most desirable for such a restless visionary as I am. It is like a temperate and gentle ecstasy that ravishes the soul, without taking away the conscience of a permanent sadness. The mind also is insensibly steeped in a languor which deadens the vivacity of the intellectual faculties, and lulls it into a half-sleep, in which, however, it feels the power of dreaming the most beautiful things. At other times it is like a softly tinted cloud which throws a pleasant shade over the spirit, and invites it to holy meditation and repose. Then the disquiets,

the ardours, all the turbulent crowd that ruffle and toss in the inner city are silent; sometimes betake themselves to prayer, and always end by getting ready for rest. Nothing could more faithfully typify this state of the soul than the evening that is just now closing in. Grey clouds, tinged with silver on the edges, are spread over all the sky. The sun, which set only a few minutes ago, has left light enough behind to temper for a while the black shadows, and to soften the fall of night. The winds are hushed, and the tranquil Ocean sends up to me, when I go out to listen on the doorstep, only a melodious murmur, which sighs in the soul like a lovely wave on the strand. The birds, first overcome by the nocturnal influence, fly towards the woods with wings that rustle in the clouds. The coppices which cover the whole hill-side of Le Val, and in the day-time resound with the chirp of the wren, the whistle of the woodpecker, and the various notes of a throng of birds, have no longer any noise in their paths and thickets, unless it be the prolonged clear note of the blackbirds, still at play and in chase of each other, after all the rest of the birds have hidden

their heads beneath their wings. The voice of man, ever the last to cease, is dying gradually away over the fields. The general murmur fades out, and one hears hardly a sound but the echoes of the villages and hamlets, where, till far on in the night, the dogs bark and children cry. The silence wraps me round; everything seeks rest but this pen of mine, which perhaps disturbs the quiet of some insect in a crease of my notebook, for it makes its slight scratching as it records these idle thoughts. Let it stop then; for all I write, have written, or shall write, will never be worth setting against the sleep of an atom.

‘10 o’clock at night.— My last walk, my last visit to the sea, to the cliffs, to all this magnificent scenery, which for two months has enchanted me. Winter is smiling on us with all the grace of spring, and is giving us days that make the birds sing, and the rose-trees of the garden bud: even the wild roses in the woods and the honeysuckles that climb over the rocks and walls are putting out. Towards two o’clock we took that path which goes winding so pleasantly through the

flowering broom and coarse reeds on the cliffs, which runs along by the wheat-fields, dips into the ravines, creeps through the hedges, and darts boldly up the steepest rocks. The end of our walk was a promontory that overlooks the bay of Quatre-Vaux. The sea in all its glory broke a hundred feet below us, with sounds that thrilled our souls as they rose towards heaven. On the horizon the fishing-boats spread out against the blue their sails of dazzling whiteness, and our gaze was alternately on that little fleet, and on another more numerous and nearer to us, which sang as it swung ; it was an innumerable flock of sea-birds gaily fishing, which rejoiced our sight with their bright plumage, and their grace upon the waves. These birds, these sails, the beauty of the day, the universal serenity, gave the ocean a gala air, and filled my soul with a glad enthusiasm, in spite of the pensive ideas that I had brought to our promontory. I gave myself up, with all my power of observation, to the study of capes, rocks, and islands, that I might carry away the print of them in my mind. As we returned, I trod religiously and with regret every step of the

path that has led me so often to these beautiful scenes in such pleasant company. It is so charming this path, when it reaches the copse woods and winds about under the hazel bushes and wild-grown box-hedges that overshadow it. There the joy that Nature had communicated to me expired, and the sadness of leave-taking came on. Tomorrow will make of this sea, these cliffs, these woods that I have loved, a dream, a fleeting thought, which I shall contemplate with another thought. To carry away as much of them as I could, and as it was in their power to give me, I silently besought them to write themselves on my mind, and never to pass from it. At the same time I put apart the bushes and thickets of box, and plunged my head amongst them to breathe the wild odours they give out, to win into their secret, to speak to their very heart.

‘The evening passed, as usual, in conversation and reading. We talked over the happiness of our recent days. I have drawn a faint shadow of it in this note-book, and we contemplated it like one dead, who had been very dear, very tender to our love.

‘Hippolyte has gone to bed now. I write this in the hush of night, by the dying fire. I have been to listen at the door to the outside noises. There are few. The ocean is far out; it is still, it sleeps, we do not hear it. The Arguénon runs brightly over the sands; the moon is sailing down its current; and its fords, where the shallow waters boil, send up a low murmur. The night-breeze hardly sighs in the wood, and everything else is still.

‘Farewell, farewell, beloved dwelling. If you love me and doubt of my constancy, hear what will reassure you. I lose half my soul in losing solitude. I enter the world with a secret dread.’

PART THE THIRD.

PARIS—THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

Part the Third.

PARIS.

I

THE secret horror of the world that weighed upon the imagination of Maurice de Guérin was a true presentiment of the experience of life that awaited him in Paris. When he left Le Val, towards the end of January 1834, his hopes of the future were of the slightest, and his prospects of the most vague ; he had not completed his twenty-fourth year, and his health was already sensibly affected by corroding cares. His cousins in the Rue d'Anjou could not afford him the hospitality of their roof, as they had done before ; and instead of his pretty room, looking into the great fir-tree, brilliant with hoar-frost, like the fir-trees on the mountains round Rayssac, he had to lodge himself, at twenty francs the month, in a close chamber, where he never saw the sun save for a quarter of

an hour at noon, when it struck upon the window of a garret opposite, and threw him down a few reflected rays, cold and joyless as lamplight; and where his horizon was bounded by blank walls enclosing a gloomy court, between the stones of which not even a weed or blade of grass had heart to grow. Sunshine and fresh air were as the very breath of life to Maurice, but he did not bewail the hard necessity of his lot; on the contrary, he took possession of his poor domicile with a prayer that God would shut his eyes and ears to the throng and tumult in the midst of which he was isolated, and give him always some vision of Nature, of Le Cayla or Le Val, to keep his thoughts pure, and elevate his soul above the temptations and discouragements of the world, where it was the Divine will that he should work out his destiny.

M. de la Morvonnois it was who had urged Maurice, with exhortations and generous reproaches, to face his fortunes, and had driven him to Paris when he was meditating a cowardly retreat to Languedoc. The majority of his friends—and he never lacked many who loved him—re-

garded the fragile young Southern as a thinker of the first order ; and rather than let him shrink into obscurity, were one and all ready to lend him a helping hand towards the public recognition of his talents. His first visit on arriving in the capital was to M. Paul Quemper, whom he found enjoying a morning sleep after a late night at a ball. The journalist received him gaily, and from his pillow where he reposed, gave the pale aspirant after literary fame and independence the benefit of his own experience in that career.

‘To begin with,’ said he, ‘it is very difficult to get yourself printed, to get yourself made known at all ;’ and then he cited the names of several young men who had been knocking for years in vain at the doors of the newspaper offices. ‘Publishers have no confidence in new men,’ he continued ; ‘they will obstinately refuse to print even a master-piece if it be the first essay of its author ; but if they have seen your name in the reviews and journals, they are easy and compliant enough. It is therefore indispensable at the outset to blaze your name abroad in the newspapers.’

Maurice listened, and reflected with some com-

placency that his was already known in the *European Review*, and that he had friends in the office of the *Catholic France*, a journal neither rich nor distinguished, and therefore perhaps the more likely to open its columns to young adventurers.

But Quemper went on disenchantingly: 'To make yourself acceptable to such publications, however, you must renounce your individuality, you must conform to their customs, speak their language, adopt their views. So long as you are under an editorial committee, you must needs forego your independence, take pains to catch their style, and to cast your thoughts in their mould. When you have achieved some celebrity, you may venture to clothe your ideas in your own fashion—not before.'

To revolt was of no use. Maurice was assured that rules and trammels existed for the uninitiated in every profession, and that absolute freedom was a precious guerdon only to be won by successful work. If he was in earnest to gain a hearing in the republic of letters, he must let his originality lie awhile in abeyance, copy where he could create,

walk in beaten paths, and perhaps wear a livery that would seem to him ridiculous or despicable. But the nail of necessity was there—the inevitable *must*—pinning him down as it pinned more passive souls; and every counsellor he sought gave him the same advice—to take courage, and toil through his term of bondage even as they had done. He groaned at the hardship of it; but, for the sake of those who loved him, and whom he had so often disappointed, he bent his neck to the yoke, and, with Quemper for his sponsor, went to and fro Paris, seeking employment for his pen.

It was Maurice de Guérin's way to enter into every new project with enthusiasm, and to imagine that he was going to do wonders at last. Buoyant hopes sprang up in him again, and visions of a brilliant future dazzled his fancy. Of course he had to prove his metal before he could be accepted anywhere, but his confidence rose so rapidly while he was preparing his specimen articles, that he ventured to rebuke the fears that were entertained for him at Le Cayla, and to assure his anxious sister Eugénie that he had only *to write*; Quemper, whose knowledge was world-wide, had taken

him by the hand, had given him lessons in the economy of money and time, had introduced him to his literary friends, and had promised to be his guide and mentor in the real life of Paris.

But Maurice very fast acquired the experience that no one can effectually help a man but a man's self. As soon as one obstacle vanished, swift arose another; and he was not gifted with the patience and tenacity of success. His new essays were pronounced below the mark of the *European Review*, and those that met with acceptance by the committee of the *Catholic France* were only paid for at the rate of six francs a column, which produced him barely sixty francs a month. The reviews and journals of higher class would not vouchsafe him a hearing; and his friends, who saw where he fell short of the various knowledge essential to a periodical writer, urged him to go through certain courses of study to mature himself. But he was without the means to live; and to keep the twin spectres of debt and want at bay, he set himself to seek some private pupils—dependence, when close at hand, proving more bitter and hateful to him than even the drudgery of teaching. Private

pupils, however, were not to be discovered in a moment, and Maurice, who had all his life loathed and rebelled against task-work, found himself now in bonds to the sorest of all weariness—the weariness of nothing to do. How he suffered from it, and how he endured it, let his journal tell.

‘*May 1.*—Always a burden, always constrained to borrow my existence. The lips of the newborn babe are strong enough to suck the breast, but I, in the flower of my youth, have not the vigour to earn my bread.

‘*The 26th.*—Why do I disquiet myself, for ever asking, “What shall I do with my life?” I have applied it to so many things, and it has taken hold on none; with an air of aptitude I remain idle, and bear a position almost without remedy. Yet who can tell whether, superfluous as I seem in the world, God is not deriving from me some good that I may not see, whether He has not given me, unknown to myself, some secret influence for the benefit of men? When I am pursued by the fatal idea of my uselessness and powerlessness, I will take refuge in this, that Providence does draw

from me some profit, does make me serve some hidden purpose, exacting only my consent, and faith in the mission that it is not His pleasure to reveal to me. By that acquiescence of my will, I make fruitful for salvation the imperceptible good that I do, and sow some merits which will germinate in secret, and flower in the heavenly recompenses of a better world. The paths that lead mortals to heaven are not all alike; some that seem to wander far out of the way meet, nevertheless, in the common centre at last; each has its windings, its angles, its mysterious mazes. Perhaps of these diverse roads that men follow, more issue in heaven than we are accustomed to believe, but I am persuaded that they are every one difficult. However it be, I walk in mine, which is very dark, with full confidence. That constant thought—that I know not the work of good to which the Lord is setting me—shall teach me to respect all creatures, to humble myself before all beings, to conduct myself on earth as in a temple where every living thing fulfils a sacred ministry, where the very atoms of dust are levites whose innumerable legions

prostrate themselves and pray in the crevices of the floor.'

This surfeit of leisure was evidently profitable to Maurice for instruction and reproof. God punished him where he had sinned: he had rebelled against the ordinance of labour, and Providence let him stand idle—'gave him his heart's desire, and sent him leanness withal into his soul.' Some of his most interesting letters belong to this dreary interval. They are chiefly letters to Eugénie and to M. de la Morvonnois; tender reminiscences of Le Val and Marie, between whom and his favourite sister he had initiated a correspondence; and long paragraphs of literary criticism, which prove him true artist and great prose-writer, notwithstanding his self-distrust and his rejection by the prophets of his day.

M. de Lamennais, who was still in Paris, received Maurice twice in the secluded old house in the Marais, to which he had transported the customs and some of the companions of La Chênaie. Élie de Kertanguy was with him there, and the steadfast disciple took pains to convince Maurice

that their revered master had not denied his principles in his recent submission to the Pope. His errors were political errors, dangerous in France only ; his doctrines were not impugned ; and his submission was a mere matter of discipline, to avoid offending simple souls of women, nuns, mothers of religious houses, and so forth. Maurice was glad to believe this true, but he was, perhaps, still more content when the *Lion*, as he called his master, roused himself again, and put forth the ' Words of a Believer,' with the announcement that henceforth he would be obedient to Rome in matters of the faith only, and that he would expound his visions of the future, its government and policy, at his own free will. Eugénie enquired of her brother what he thought of this book. 'I think,' said he, 'it is a book of the future which events will commentate, and which God will justify by the things that He will show us if we live a little longer, and certainly to posterity.'

But the majority of Lamennais' friends forsook him, and 'old Europe shuddered at the publication of this terrible book.' Rome condemned it as 'false, calumnious, rash, inciting to anarchy, con-

trary to the Word of God, impious, scandalous ; insignificant in its bulk, but vast in its perversity.' Lamennais would not bend again, and from this time forth to his death pious Catholics called him *heretic*. He was a heretic to Le Cayla and Rayssac, and it was for years a secret terror in Eugénie's heart lest her beloved Maurice should have wandered astray with his master beyond ever finding his way back to the fold.

II

As the spring advanced, Maurice's circumstances went from bad to worse. He met with no pupils, and in four months had only been printed four times. Yet his expenses, careful as they were, must needs go on, and before midsummer he had contracted debts that dismayed him. In all his difficulties, however, his friends stuck to him ; and M. Paul Quemper urgently represented that if his heart failed him now and he abandoned Paris, his future was irrevocably thrown away. Interest was made to obtain for him a professorship in the Collège Juilly, where the Abbé Gerbet was domi-

ciled since the breaking up of La Chênaie ; and while that negotiation hung undecided, M. Vacher, a former companion of Maurice's at Stanislas, carried him off for a month's rest and renovation to his country home in La Perche, a hundred and twenty miles from his troubles. His cousin, M. Auguste Reynaud, undertook to plead with his father for the payment of his debts, which did not in all amount to fifty pounds, and for some allowance to help him to hold on in Paris and persevere till the dawn of better days. After the lapse of a fortnight, a favourable reply to both petitions was returned from M. de Guérin, and Maurice went his way to the woods and fields again with a mind eased of its heaviest burdens.

M. Vacher's house stood in the midst of a pleasant country declining to the west, with deep hollow roads overshadowed by trees, like the roads of Brittany, with pathways through the corn and enclosures of broom, furze, and stunted oaks. The pastures were rich, and cider flowed there abundantly. The life was as simple as at Le Cayla, and Maurice was perfectly in his element—reading a little, writing a little ; dining, disputing with the

curé of the parish, reposing, dreaming, giving himself up to the pleasures of friendship and talk, enjoying the country and those lazy delights that he could find nowhere but in rural solitudes. Not, however, that he could quite put off his cares; the wise counsels of Eugénie reminded him of them and his duty together:—

‘Two good letters have just reached us, dear Maurice, yours and one from Félicité, in which she mentions a situation that has been offered you at Juilly. You will not have said no, I hope, unless for reasons to us unknown. What better can you do in your position than accept a place where you can wait the turn of the tide without any cost but of good-will and courage?—for good-will is wanted everywhere, I think, to play the master. Thus one after another all your faculties will be brought into exercise, and, the opportunity come, each will be ready for its work, and will respond to the call.’

Having thus said her say of warning and advice, the tender sister goes on to draw him a home-

picture such as he loved. It is a July evening when she writes :—

‘ My correspondence runs on as usual. Long letters to the mountain, short ones to Gaillac, and often to Lisle too. Yesterday I had seven letters to write. My quiet little room is a veritable post-office. You know how pleasant it is. At this moment I can hear the grasshoppers chirping, and from time to time a nightingale singing that has its nest down below in the juniper-trees. This side of Le Cayla is rather spoilt by the fall of the great oak and the great cherry-tree, which the wind blew down in the winter ; but that is nothing to the wood of the Seven Springs, all laid low, our dear alley without shade, our benches upset and broken : it pains me to see the ruin, and I never go there, or only go to meditate. Where shall I be, where shall we all be, when those trees are grown up again ? ’

The professorship at the Collège Juilly was still in doubt when Maurice returned to Paris early in August, and his expectations of it vanished by-and-by in smoke—the heads of the college deciding to

retain the master he was to have replaced. On this new disappointment, he was thankful to be put in charge of a little class of scholars who were staying at Stanislas through the vacation, 'like sick sheep left in the fold while the flock was merry in the field.' It was holiday time in Paris, and he found himself within the college walls as in a deserted village, where only twenty inhabitants remained of its four hundred. He occupied a vast bare room, his few books and other belongings furnishing but a speck in the empty space. But he did not complain. Now and then a friend of the few who were not flown to fresh pastures sought him out, and in the evenings his good old master, the Abbé Buquet, who slept in a room adjoining his, drew him from his solitude for an animating, cheering talk. His class consisted of only five pupils, who cost him little time and less labour, and left him long hours at his disposal, which he gave to work of choice. Hopes of a permanent engagement when the schools reopened were also held out to him, and instead of shrinking from the drudgery of teaching now, he courted it. He was willing to give one-half of his life

to assuring its foundation—daily bread, a roof over him, and clothing—so that he might tempt the fortune of letters at his ease with the other half.

But he had not yet learnt all that experience had to teach him of the difficulties of existence to a poor young man in Paris. Necessity, the hard step-mother, would by no means be content with a moiety of his days; she would have them all, devour them all, down to the very crumbs. The vacation came to an end, and his dream of a professorship at Stanislas vanished as that of Juilly had done. He must therefore look farther abroad; and hearing that a master was wanted in a school at Versailles, he went to enquire about the place. The duties of it were—four hours daily of teaching in class, to assist the boys with their private studies, and the surveillance of them at recreation and in their walks; all this for a salary of sixteen pounds. Maurice would none of it, and went back to Paris quite sick at heart. His friend Quemper was gone into Brittany, and his cousin Reynaud could not succour him, for he was in straits himself. Everything seemed against him, his sky

at the darkest, his world a desert. He did not write home of his troubles, nor to Le Val; he confided them only to his journal; and presently again there was a rift of brightness in the clouds. The master of the fifth class at Stanislas wished for a month's release, and Maurice undertook his duties for sixteen shillings a week. He found one or two private pupils besides, and his work in school and out kept him breathlessly busy from half-past seven in the morning till half-past nine at night. He slept at his cousin's house; the college dinner stood him in the stead of breakfast, and in the evening he dined at a restaurant for a shilling, as a young man beginning life should.

Urgent necessity, a little reason, and some grains of self-love, strengthened Maurice to support the burden of toils under which, at first, he almost sank exhausted; and ultimately, to alleviate his position, he made a sturdy resolution to prepare himself, by hard night-study, for the degree equivalent to Master of Arts in our Universities. Such continuous labour and his privations together could not but tell on a delicate organisation like his. He airily alludes to it in a letter to Eugénie:—

‘The idea of Lucie, from a little child grown into a young girl, came on me like a laughing warning of the flight of years. Do you remember that Psyche running after butterflies? What does she with her large blue eyes? What says she with her soft, slow, lisping tongue? At my return, I know not when, I shall frighten all these young things, bearded, wrinkled, grizzled as I am. Most people take me for thirty; some for five-and-thirty; a child has guessed me at forty. Oh! if I were a woman! The blackness of my beard, my tanned skin, and some lines that are deepening, are the reason why. Time ploughs, the sun burns, the soul drains off our lees: what would you have a poor man’s face become who is thus preyed upon?’

Maurice’s temporary engagement at Stanislas was exchanged in November for a permanent one, which gave him just enough to exist; and it was at this period of her brother’s life—all swallowed up by material work and care—that Eugénie de Guérin began to write her famous journal, to keep him in mind of better things and home. Le Cayla, its

love and its daily doings, were brought vividly before the poor exile in Paris; and some of its pictures, that cheered him in the fall of this year of adversities, will fitly close its history.

III

‘TO MY BELOVED BROTHER MAURICE.

‘*November 15, 1834.*—Since you wish it, dear Maurice, I am going to continue this little journal that you like so much. But as I am short of paper, I shall use a stitched quire, intended for poetry, of which I only erase the title; thread and leaves, all shall remain, and you shall have it, big as it is, at the first opportunity.

‘. . . Your letter gave me a flash of joy—I am wrong—a real happiness, for the good things it is full of. At last, your future begins to dawn; you have a profession, a social position, a starting-point for actual life. God be thanked! it is what I have most in the world desired for you, and for me, because my future depends on yours—they are twins. I have had some beautiful dreams on that

subject, and will tell you them perhaps. For the present, good-bye ; I must write to Mimi.*

'*The 18th.*—I am furious with the grey cat. The mischievous beast has just robbed me of a little half-frozen pigeon that I was trying to thaw by the fire. The poor little thing had begun to revive ; I meant to tame it ; it would have grown fond of me ; and there is my whole scheme eaten up by a cat. What miscalculations we make in life ! This event, and every other of to-day, has passed in the kitchen. There I take up my abode all the morning and a part of the evening, while I am without Mimi. I have to superintend the cook : papa comes down sometimes, and I read to him, by the oven or the fireside, bits out of the "*Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church.*" This great book struck Perril with amazement. What a lot of words there are in it ! That boy is a real original. One evening he asked me if the soul was immortal ; then, what a philosopher was ? We had got upon great questions, you see. When I told him that a philosopher was a wise

* The pet name of her sister Marie.

and learned person, "Then, mademoiselle, you are a philosopher." It was said with a simplicity and frankness that might have flattered Socrates; but it made me laugh so much, that all my gravity as catechist was gone for the evening. A day or two ago Perril left us, much to his sorrow; his time here was up on St. Brice's Day. Now he goes about with his little pig truffle-hunting. If he comes this way, I shall go and ask him if he thinks I still look like a philosopher. . . .

'*The 20th.*—I like the snow—a white world has a look of heaven. Mud, the bare ground, distress me, sadden me. This morning I can see nothing but the tracks on the road, and the foot-marks of the little birds. Softly as they alight, they leave their tiny traces in a thousand figures upon the snow. It is pretty to watch the wee red claws, like pencils of coral drawing them. Even winter has its charms, its pleasant scenes. There is beauty everywhere for those who have eyes to discern it. *God has made all things well.* I must go now, and see what there is to please me by the kitchen fire. This is but a little good-morning to the snow and you at getting up. . . .

‘I have had to prepare an extra dish for Sauveur Roquier, who has been to see us. It was ham cured with sugar, over which the poor lad licked his lips. Good things do not fall often to his share—that was why I wanted to give him a treat. It is the forlorn and desolate we should use with consideration: humanity, charity, tell us so. The lucky can do without it; and yet there is not much in the world save for them. . . .

‘Day before yesterday papa brought me from Clairac “Ivanhoe,” and “The Age of Louis XV.” This is our intellectual provision for some of these long winter evenings. I am reader, but I can only read by snatches; for now a key is wanted, now this, now that—fifty things—myself often, and then the book must be laid down. Oh! Mimi, when will you come back to help the poor housekeeper, who misses you at every moment? Have I told you that yesterday I had news of her at Clairac Fair, to which I went? What yawns I left upon that poor old balcony! Mimi’s letter came, at last, in relief of my weariness, and it was the only pleasant thing I saw at Clairac.

‘I have just come up quite happy from the

kitchen, where I stayed longer than usual to-night, to persuade Paul, one of our servants, to go to confession at Christmas. He has promised me: he is a good lad, and will keep his word. God be praised, my evening is not lost. What joy, if I could thus every day win a soul to God! Scott has been neglected to-night; but what reading could be worth Paul's promise? It is ten o'clock, and I must go to rest.

'The 24th.—A gap of three days, dear Maurice. That is a long time for me, who do not like a blank, but I have had no time to sit down. Since Saturday I have only gone in and out of my little room; not until now have I been able to remain, and it is to write a long letter to Mimi, and a word or two here. Perhaps this evening I may add a few lines, if anything happens meanwhile. For the present, all is tranquil, within and without, in my heart and the house—a happy state, but which leaves little to record, like peaceful reigns. My day began with a letter from Cousin Paul; he invites me to go to Alby; but I cannot pledge myself; I grow sedentary. Willingly would I make a vow to live for ever cloistered at

Le Cayla. No place in the world is so sweet to me as home. Oh, happy home! How sorry I am for you, poor exile, so far away from it, only seeing your kindred in dreams, bidding us neither good-morning nor good-night, living a stranger in the world, with father, brothers, sisters elsewhere! It is sad, yet I must not wish it otherwise. We cannot keep you always; but I hope to see you again, and that comforts me: a thousand times a day I dream of your return, and anticipate how happy we shall be.

‘ . . . How beautiful must be the heaven of heavens! That is what I was thinking a minute ago, while I stood contemplating the glorious winter sky. It is my custom to open my window before I lie down to sleep, to see what sort of weather it is, and to enjoy it an instant, if it be fine. This evening I looked out longer than my wont, so entrancing was the splendid night. I thought of God, who has made our prison so radiant: I thought of the saints, who have all these beautiful stars under their feet: I thought of you, admiring them perhaps as I was doing. But for fear of cold, I should be admiring them

still. This evening Éran brought me two letters from Louise—charming letters, witty, sensible, affectionate—and all for me. God knows how dearly I love her! This is my day to the end of it. It is possible Mimi may come to-morrow. At this very hour, I may have her beside me, on the same pillow, she telling me about Gaillac, and I her about Le Cayla.

‘*The 26th.*—I did not write at all yesterday, I did nothing but wait. At last, in the evening, dear Mimi arrived. Now I am happy. I repeat over and over everything that I have done, said, or thought since she left us, and she details me a thousand matters of our friends, of society, of what she has seen—and delightful indeed it is to talk and to listen. Oh, the joy of meeting again! It is worth while going away now and then, if only for the joy of coming back. I began a letter to you yesterday, but I was not in writing mood—all my thoughts were at the window. To-day I have recovered myself, and am going to finish my page. But it will be after dinner, for recreation. . . . First of all, I must tell you that I have been enjoying the sunshine on the hill-side of the

Seven Springs. The sunshine is one of my greatest enjoyments; but the hill is dreary now—I could scarcely fix on the spot where our bench used to be. A little while ago there were some remains of it—a few bolts and chips. As I thought, looked about, and regretted, I sat down on a fallen oak—my bench now. That, at least, the wind will not drift away. There I waited for the return of Marie, who had ridden down on Pigimbert to La Vialerette, with some pomegranate plants for Marie de Thézac. Why cannot I find a messenger to bring you something?

‘*The 27th.*—I close St. Augustine, my mind filled with these admirable words: “Throw yourself on the bosom of God, as on a bed of rest.” What a beautiful thought, and what sweet ease should we find in life, if we knew how, like the saints, to rest in God! They go to Him as children to their mother, and on His breast they sleep, they pray, they weep, they live. God is the place of saints, but we, mortals, know only the earth, this poor earth, black, arid, mournful, as an accursed dwelling. Nothing has happened to-day; we have not even seen the sun; no one

has been near us, only this evening some ravens flew by. Nor have I been out, except in spirit: my thoughts do not stray abroad, they go up to heaven.

'The 28th.—This morning, before daylight, I was seeking a spark amongst the embers to light my candle. I could not see one, and I was just going back to bed when a bit of coal that I had stirred flashed into flame, and my lamp was lit. I dressed quickly, said my prayers, and set off with Marie to Cahuzac. How glad I was to have company on the road that I have travelled so long alone! The morning was misty, and I could not see the mountain—that dear country towards which I always look when the weather is clear. When we got there, the chapel was occupied, for which I was not sorry. I do not like to be hurried, but to have time, before I go in, to lay bare my soul before God. This often takes me a long while, for my thoughts are apt to fly about like the autumn leaves. At ten o'clock I was on my knees, listening to words the most salutary that were ever spoken; and I came away feeling myself a better creature. Every burden thrown

off lightens our march; and when the soul has laid down the load of its sins at God's feet, it feels as if it had wings. What an admirable thing is confession! What comfort, what light, what strength is given me every time after I have said, "*I have sinned!*"

'*The 29th.*—Cloaks, clogs, umbrellas, all the equipment of winter, went with us this morning to Andillac, where we passed the whole day, either at the parsonage or in church. I like this life of a country Sunday, so active, gossiping, and varied. We meet all our neighbours on the road; we have a curtesy from all the women, and as we go along such a talk about the poultry, the sheep, the goodman, and the bairns! My great delight is to pet the little ones, and to see them run and hide their shy rosy faces behind their mothers' aprons. They are afraid of *las dam-maisélos*, as of everybody strange to them. One of these young creatures said the other day to its grandmother, who was talking of coming to see us, "*Minino*, you must not go to that castle; there is a black hole there." What is the reason that the noble's castle has been in all ages an

object of dread? Because of the horrors that were committed there in old times? I suppose so.

‘*December 8.*—I never open a book of piety that I do not come upon some admirable words that seem as if they were written for me. Listen: “Those who hope in the Lord shall find their strength renewed from day to day. When they are utterly worn out and ready to fall, suddenly they shall have wings like an eagle; they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not faint. Go on, then, pious soul, go on; and when thou canst no more, let thy faith and courage increase, for the Lord will sustain thee. How often have we need of this help! Tell me, weak, wavering, feeble soul, what would become of thee without this Divine succour?” These are Bossuet’s words. I have opened no other book to-day; it has been spent in little cares and duties that are not worth talking about, but that take up, nevertheless, a great deal of time. Good-night, dear.

‘*The 9th.*—I have just come in from warming myself at every fireside in the village. It is a round that Mimi and I often make, and which has its satisfactions. To-day we have been seeing

sick people, holding forth on doses and diet-drinks. "Take this, do that;" and they listen to us just as if we were the doctor. We prescribed sabots for a little fellow who had caught cold going barefoot; and for his brother, who, with a bad headache, was lying quite flat, we prescribed a pillow; it relieved him, but I am afraid it will not cure him. He is at the beginning of an inflammation of the lungs, and these poor people live in the filth of their hovels, like animals in their stable; the bad air poisons them. When I come home to Le Cayla, I feel as if I were in a palace.

'The last day of December.—Christmas is come—the beautiful festival, the one I most love, which gives me as much joy as it gave the shepherds of Bethlehem. Verily, one's whole heart sings at this beautiful advent of God, which is announced on every side by carols and the ringing of the pretty *nada/et*. There is nothing in Paris to give you an idea of what Christmas is with us. You have not even the midnight mass. It was a glorious night, and we all of us went to it, papa at our head. I never saw a finer sky; papa kept

perpetually throwing back the hood of his cloak to look up at it. The ground was white with hoar-frost, but we were not cold ; besides, the air was warmed by the bundles of blazing torch-wood, which our servants carried before us to light the way. It was very pretty, I assure you, and I would fain have had you walking with us towards the church, through those lanes between bushy hedges, as white as if they were in blossom. The hoar-frost makes the most lovely flowers. We saw one long spray so exquisite that we wanted to take it with us as a posy for the altar, but it melted in our hands : all flowers fade so soon ! I was sorry for my posy ; it was mournful to see it melt and drip away. I slept at the parsonage ; the curé's good sister would keep me, and gave me an excellent supper of boiled milk. Papa and Mimi went home again to warm themselves by the Yule log. Since then we have had cold and mist, an overcast sky, and dull spirits. To-day, when the sun is shining again, I am cheerful and come out like the pimpernel, that pretty little flower which never shows itself but in the sun.

‘These are my last thoughts for the Old Year ; a few hours and it will be ended, and we shall be beginning the New Year. Oh ! how quickly time passes ! Alas, alas ! You might think I am regretting it. But it is not so ; I regret neither time nor what it bears away from us. It is vacant, useless days, days lost for heaven, that I regret, and that make me look back at my life. But I am at the door of the future now, and I resign myself to whatever may come forth of it. To-morrow I shall pray that you may be happy ; I shall pray for papa, for Mimi, for Éran, for all whom I love. It is the day of New Year’s gifts, and I must carry mine to heaven. I receive all my joys thence ; for, indeed, upon earth I find few things to my liking. The longer I live, the less pleasure I take here ; I see the years come and go without sorrow, as so many steps towards the better world. I have no trouble or grief to make me think in this way—do not imagine it ; I would tell you if it were so ; it is only the home-sickness which seizes on every soul that begins to think of heaven.

‘The hour strikes—the last I shall hear while I

am writing to you. How many hours that old clock has marked—the dear old thing, that has seen so many of us pass away without ever stirring itself, like a sort of eternity! I am very fond of it, because it has struck every hour in my life, the pleasantest hours when I was not listening to it. I remember when I had my cot at its foot, and amused myself by watching the index move. Time amuses us at four years old. What pretty fancies revisit us in our solitude! My lamp is dying out, and I must leave you. Thus ends my year, beside a dying lamp.'

IV

THE new year began for Maurice de Guérin as sombrely as the old year had ended. He had, indeed, achieved, at last, the wherewithal to provide him food and shelter, and Eugénie, in her simplicity, congratulated him on being almost rich with his salary of eighteen hundred francs; but the luck was not very bright in Maurice's view. He considered it as a mere temporary refuge, from which he might be ousted at any moment, and which he only kept by an almost penal servitude

from dawn till midnight. 'How we change,' he writes to his father at this time; 'or rather, how events, necessity, age, and revolutions within ourselves, unnoted until they are wrought out, change the aspect of things, and modify our tastes and our inclinations! Two years ago, and less, I hated nothing so much as public instruction. A professor's chair seemed to me the most detestable seat in the world: I would as willingly have sat on needles. Now, without having any great attractions for me, teaching is quite endurable, and is, indeed, the only profession I can enter in the hope of leading a consistent life.'

Pity that it was so engrossing, so greedy a profession! The world, with its cares and distractions, was drawing him by little and little, and Le Cayla and Rayssac began to grow dim in the distance. In one of her letters about this time, Eugénie complains that Mimi is grieved by the brevity and absence of detail in her brother's letters, by his wide margins, and abrupt conclusions; she is grieved, too, herself, and even threatens that he shall have nothing for nothing—she will give up her little journal, if

he does not tell them more of himself. But the threat is vain ; the little journal goes on still, with its tender confidences of heart and soul, its pictures of her busy household life, and epitomes of her pleasant correspondence with Le Val.

Each morning, on his way to Stanislas, Maurice had to cross the gardens of the Tuileries ; and as the wind went whistling through the branches of the old chestnuts, he pleased himself in imagining again the sea sounds along the Breton cliffs, where he had wandered with his friends. It was a tender delight to him to recall, in the midst of the city, their twilight rambles by the stormy capes, their rests in the drowsy sunshine of the Ladies' Bay, and the cheerful faces that gathered round the hearth at night. But a dark eclipse was to fall over these gentle memories ; for suddenly into the bright home entered death, and rapt away, almost without warning, the sweet wife who was its chief joy. On the evening of Thursday, the 22nd of January, after an illness of only two days, Madame de la Morvonnois died, and the happy circle of Le Val was broken up for ever. The influence of her friendship upon Maurice had been very good, and

the final withdrawal of that grace of pure affection struck him with a feeling of intolerable desolation. His life in Paris had now become that of many another poor young man who has to devote his whole time and strength to procuring the bare means of subsistence; and his sense of lonely misery and wasted powers grew so oppressive, that he longed for any event to deliver him from the thralldom of his position. But no deliverance came. Necessity gnawed upon him with an ever sharper tooth. He ceased to dream dreams, to write poetry, to have any hope of a future. His letters to Le Cayla, written often in haste between two lessons, were drier than those Mimi had rebuked before. His life gave him nothing to tell. It was always the same, and more monotonous than if he were buried in the depths of the country. He went into no society; he saw no friend but his cousin Auguste; he gave up fretting about systems of religion and politics; he severed himself from M. de Lamennais, and began to err and stray in his own fashion in search of a philosophy which should help him, better than Christianity, to bear the invincible evils of human life; and, no doubt,

in his hopeless quest, he fell for awhile into those grosser temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which beset the steps of men who voluntarily forsake the light; no doubt, also, but he experienced the self-contempt, the self-loathing, that overtake a soul faithless to its purer instincts and higher knowledge. The records of this period in his journal are ineffably sad.

'March 24.—Formerly my sorrows were as if steeped in tears; now they are become arid. Once, some drops of balm were mingled with the bitter waves of my grief; now they are pure gall, and leave no secret, lingering savour of sweetness. . . . If I have yet a few steps to take upon earth, I would fain they were taken in quiet. I know neither whence I am, nor whither I go. I can but walk softly in the peace of an ignorance which will not be long ere it is enlightened. The true wisdom is to have patience for that which cannot last. . . .

'April 3.—Craving, unquiet, seeing only by glimpses, my mind is smitten with all the ills that can overtake a youth destined never to ripen into

maturity. I grow old, and exhaust myself in the most trivial efforts of thought, in the most futile passions of imagination ; all that stirs in me advances so little, and that which cannot stir beholds from so far off, that it would have been better for me a hundred times had I received a blind and paralytic spirit. My brain is drying up. When the wind blows, I feel it in my head as the tree feels it in the withered branches of its crown. Work is insufferable to me, or, rather, it is impossible. Study brings on, not drowsiness, but an irritable, nervous disgust, that drives me forth into the streets and public places. Spring, which in past years soothed and made me happy with its mysterious goodness, crushes me this year under the burden of a sudden feverish heat. Life does not fall softly from heaven in the freshness of the nights, nor in the dew of the showers, nor in the breath of the universal air : it drops down like a weight.

‘*June 5.*—Oh, my God, how I do suffer from life ! I advance in years ; my mind lets fall its rags of old raiment by the way, my bonds are broken, my prejudices are overthrown, I begin to

show my head above the waves, but my existence is still in thrall, still turns the same weary round on the same painful centre. Is there any philosophy will apply to this evil? Life perplexes me more and more. Oh, School of the Stoics, instituted to combat sorrow by strength and constancy of soul, you have only known how to vanquish life by death, and we have not got beyond you!

'The 12th.—I do not commit my bad actions impetuously. There is in the depths of me I know not what deadly and stagnant waters, like that deep pool where Stenio, the poet, perished.

'The 22nd.—What makes me at times despair of myself is the intensity of my suffering for little things, and the for ever blind and aimless purposes to which I put my moral powers. To stir a grain of sand, I use energy that might suffice to force a stone up to the mountain-tops. I could better bear the heaviest burdens than this light, almost impalpable dust that clings to me. I perish secretly day by day. Life escapes me by invisible stings. I am weary of what surrounds me. I know neither where nor how I would live; but I detest my profession, which is ruining me

and making me wretched. It upsets at every instant the little philosophy that I can glean in free and tranquil hours, and vexes me with men still children. How I hate myself in these humiliations! How I long to leap on some shore of liberty, pushing back with my foot the detestable boat that carries me over!'

V

THERE was great anxiety for Maurice at Le Cayla all through the winter and spring of this year. His letters were long to wait for, and Eugénie, watching, wearying for them week after week, figured to herself every disaster that could befall him, and them through him, amidst the seductions and solitude of Paris. Was he ill? Was he forgetting them at home? Was he ceasing to love them? When, at last, a letter came, carelessly or considerately phrased as it might be, it could not fail to reflect in some measure the gloom of his circumstances, and the profound depression of his spirit. Eugénie sympathised with him passionately, and sacrificed many an hour of

her rest to devising comfort and encouragement for him. She records in her journal that one whole night of May she spent at her desk, until the dawn surprised her with her pen still in her hand. She could see the star-lit heaven from her table, and she looked up to it for inspiration, till she believed that an angel was dictating to her the tender, wise thoughts she wrote. Her fear was that Maurice had fallen a victim to that black melancholy which was constitutional with them both, and she entreated him to pray against it fervently; to pray like a simple child of God; for she did not know yet that Maurice had ceased to pray, that he had drifted out of the clear stream of Christian faith into the turbid floods of worldly philosophy, and had grown indifferent to the Cross that all her hopes were anchored by. She besought him to be more open with her, to tell her what he suffered, and the cause of his suffering; but other changes had weakened the confidence and repose he once had in her counsels; and he showed her only his ways of thinking, the workings of his brain, and kept his spiritual part a secret from her. She was

wounded at his reserve, but she lived in expectation through the summer that he would come to Le Cayla for his holidays, and that, talking face to face again, the lost love and trust would be resuscitated: but that hope was also doomed to disappointment; the cholera was in the south, and Maurice reasoned himself into the notion that it was kinder not to go home at all than to go and have to leave his people in peril of the scourge. So he accompanied a young friend on a long journey of pleasure, and with the record of his regrets that his holiday-tour is over, his journal, which had been gradually falling into neglect for several months past, ceases altogether.

‘October 13, 1835.—I have travelled. I know not what caprice of my destiny it was that set me whirling down the Loire to the sea. I have seen on its banks the plains where Nature is puissant and gay; I have seen royal and antique dwellings, all marked with memories which hold their place in the sad legend of humanity. Chambord, Blois, Amboise, Chenonceaux—the towns on both banks, Orleans, Tours, Saumur, Nantes, and the

Ocean rumbling at the end. Thence I struck into the interior of the country, as far as Bourges and Nevers—a region of vast woodlands, where the far-thrilling murmurs of an immense expanse prevail and never cease. Fifty leagues I journeyed on foot, the rest on horseback, or driving, or by boat. Long and keenly shall I regret my days of fatigue across the great fields, climbing from horizon to horizon, revelling in space, and receiving five or six times in the day those wonderful impressions which arise for the wayfarer on all sides from new scenes. The stream of travel is delightful, and fain would I follow it all my life. But who will set me afloat on that Nile? . . .’

PART THE FOURTH.

MYRTLE AND AMARANTH.

I

It was now a year and three-quarters since Maurice de Guérin had left the sweet solitudes of Brittany to cast himself on the stony mercies of Paris. The worst of his struggle for existence was over. Soon after his return to his duties at Stanislas, he changed his dismal, sunless room in the old Hôtel de Valance for a more cheerful one in the neighbourhood of the College, and by degrees he learnt to work almost uncomplainingly in the mill to which he was condemned. His mind and character were hardening both, and, as they hardened, the tenderness and poetry passed away from his spirit. Did any friend try to invest his life with dignity, by alluding to its trials and sufferings, and the courage he had to endure them, he put the fantastic halo by, declaring, with a cold irony, that he had no longer any need of courage: the difficulties of his existence consist only in some material fatigues to which he is now inured; habit has overcome his repugnance to his profession, quelled his revolts, and

M

reduced him to complete submission. When pleaded with to use his precious faculties for nobler purposes than this drudgery of teaching, he says, No: why break the course of his resolutions and interrupt his toil, learnt with such pain? His longing is no more for adventure, but for quiet and security. Literary fame has lost its attraction for him; he prefers to look at the cold, monotonous world as it is, and will vex and weary his eyes no more with contemplating it through the prism of art and poetry. His ambition has declined to a lower level altogether. If he can acquire Latin and Greek enough to distribute while he lives to little boys, that must suffice him. He goes on turning his wheel in an equal way, bound to his task, like those Scythian slaves whose sight their masters destroyed, that they might labour without distraction—and he is content.

Content for a little while, perhaps, but certainly not for long. The buoyant air of Paris began to have its natural influence on the philosopher of five-and-twenty. He kept his old friends, Morvonnois, Quemper, and the rest, but he made some new ones, M. d'Aureville and M. Amédée Rénée,

chiefs of the free, light literature which he had once contemned, and, faithfulest friend of all, M. de Trébutien, the learned antiquary, now keeper of the Library of Caen. Those who met Maurice when he had taken his place amongst these ardent, intrepid young spirits, would hardly have recognised, in the elegant man of the world and brilliant talker he had become, the reserved, fastidious student of a year or two ago. His manner in society was marked by a peculiar grace and fascination; his appearance was highly distinguished; his voice and language were exquisite; and when he fell in, by chance, with people who could talk, he grew animated, and enjoyed the conversation as he enjoyed music, sunshine, sweet odours, and all other pleasant and delightful things. His new comrades laughed him out of his nervous vagaries, and could not sympathise in his passion for perfection; and, if amongst them he lost somewhat of the purity and simplicity of his youthful impressions, he gained in vigour and manliness of tone. Though he never printed anything, he still occasionally wrote, and of this period is a remarkable prose poem, 'The Centaur,' which competent critics

have pronounced to be a work of the finest genius, executed in perfect classical taste and form. He planned other pieces, but finished none; for weariness and discouragement still too often prevailed against his best endeavours, and it was still necessary that he should labour to live.

Perhaps at Le Cayla they never precisely realised the severity of Maurice's existence in Paris. Eugénie and Marie both were a little difficult and exacting with him, and imagined themselves more forgotten than they were. The result appeared in Eugénie's frequent silences; she dropped her journal, took it up again, mislaid it, and found it after several weeks, fallen a prey to rats.

And thus the days went on, the summer and autumn and winter days, to the spring of 1836, and Maurice was still so poor that, having bought a great coat to keep his own back warm, he had not means to fulfil his sisters' commissions for new cloaks to wrap them against the cold and damp of their daily journeys to church at Andillac; for which he expressed himself keenly remorseful — he would so much rather have starved himself than that they should

shiver. To M. de la Morvonnois he confessed that his purse was so empty that, although he had not been home for four years, he would be obliged to spend the long vacation in Paris; but, as he withheld the plea of poverty in his letters to Le Cayla, they believed there that he did not come because he did not wish to come. Eugénie was especially wounded by his supposed indifference. 'Maurice is much changed, both for good and for evil,' she says, in writing to one of his old friends, who, perhaps, had also to complain of some neglect. 'In acquiring firmness, his heart has lost its tenderness. He is no longer the brother who loved me like a child, and naïvely told me everything. He is silent now: why? God knows. It pains me, but I am silent too. What would be the use of complaining? I wait until I see him again.' Since May her journal was a blank (it was blank for an entire year), and her letters to Maurice were very rare. In August, however, the first of the holiday months that he had to abide grilling in Paris, she went up to the mountains, to Rayssac, and, a few days after her return home in September, she wrote to him of her visit.

He had been with her on the last occasion, four long years ago now.

‘It is a week since I returned from the mountains, sad enough, thinking of Louise, my heart full of regret at our separation. Oh, what it costs to leave a friend, when we have been happy together! Good-bye is a word that makes me weep, that kills me. Fénelon is right when he says that friendship, which makes one of the greatest pleasures of life, gives also inexpressible pain. We felt it, Louise and I. There is bitterness at the bottom of the sweetest of human joys.

‘My friend, I thought of you everywhere on the mountains: under the lime-trees, in the little parlour, in the gallery where they gave me some letters of yours to read—those dear letters which M. de Bayne preserves with other valuable papers. I think it would please him very much if you wrote to him occasionally still, and told him what is going on in the literary world. He loves you cordially. The name of “M. Maurice” must be in his heart, for it is often on his lips. That affection ought to gratify you; it gratifies me,

and all the more because, as your sister, I share it. I do not know why M. de Bayne treats me with such high distinction. He would come and talk to me of his great authors, of his great thoughts; we opened all manner of books—history, philosophy, legends, poetry. His conversations of an evening were quite a course of literature; for it was in the evenings we talked, he in his easy-chair with his back to the window, I on the large sofa, where the Countess has left her impression; Léontine at the other end, Louise in a chair next to me, and Criquet at her feet or in her lap. There was the round table too, with books, magazines, newspapers, and our knitting heaped about the lamp, and underneath, the shadow where the cricket used to come. It was all just like four years ago, only you were not there. Louise is not in the least changed. She looks as young as ever; she is as gay, and has the same glance of fire that she always had. How lovely she is! I wish Raphaël could have seen her. Even I have a beautiful picture of her in my mind's eye.

‘To-morrow we are expecting the Reynauds—

big and little. Papa longs to embrace Auguste, his wife and children. I had that pleasure the first, on my way through Alby. Imagine how glad I was, and how soon I made acquaintance with Félicité. Our air of being friends at first sight astonished everybody, for they did not know we were friends in heart already. I find our cousin good, simple, and kindly, and she loves you so much that my heart quite warms to her. We talked of you. "Tell me about Maurice: what is he doing? does he remember us? will he ever come?" and other questions, I asked, which I shall ask again, when we have more leisure. It is rainy weather, unluckily, and that will prevent our going out to sit under the trees, where it would be safe to talk secrets.

'How happy we should be if you were here too! But I will not think of it, since thinking only makes me regret the more. Nevertheless, recollect I must have you, we must all have you next year. Make up your mind to it, therefore, or tell us plainly you will not come. I see nothing but the examination for your degree that can hinder you, and between now and then there is a whole

year to prepare. Make haste and come, then. Think of the pleasure it will be to us, of the pleasure to papa—to dear papa, who loves you so much that we might be jealous, did we not know that we also have our share in his tenderness. For a father's heart is large enough for all.'

II

MAURICE did not stay in Paris through the summer from caprice or choice; and it was impossible that he could deny himself a country holiday the whole year round without suffering for it. After the long vacation was over, he went back to his toils unrefreshed; and the cold winter winds had hardly begun to blow, when his strength gave way, and he broke down at his work altogether. A low nervous fever and cough harassed him perpetually, and the doctors whom he consulted advised his return to the mild air of the south. But for the present he was quite incapable of the long journey. His good cousins, Anguste and Félicité, nursed him, and he had the kind watchfulness of other friends as well; but his constitution, never very

robust, was now dangerously shaken, and the intelligence of his condition plunged his father and sisters into the worst fears for him. In the leisure of sickness, he wrote once more to Eugénie in his old, confidential, loving strain, and thereupon she resumed her journal—was manifestly glad to resume it, as a relief to her burdened, anxious heart. ‘I am sorry that I discontinued it,’ she says; ‘I was afraid of tiring you with the details of my life. . . . No more fears now on that score, no more doubts of your friendship, nor of your brotherly affection. I was wrong: so much the better; I fancied that it was you.’

As the winter passed, Maurice in some measure recovered his health, and was able to return to his duties at Stanislas. The necessities of existence pressed upon him, and he did not defer to take up his yoke a day longer than he could help. The first revival of force was a revival also of hope; he set aside the doctors’ advice that he should return to his native air, and wrote home quite gaily that he was well again. And they were glad to believe him. It was now spring—May weather, chill and changeable; and its changes made a

back-ground for Eugénie's meditations, recorded almost daily to please Maurice.

' *The 5th.*—Rain, cold blasts, a wintry sky, and the nightingale singing by snatches under the dead leaves—it is sad for the month of May. And I am sad too. I wish my spirit did not sympathise so keenly with the times and seasons, that it did not open like a flower to the sun, nor close in the shade. . . . To amuse myself, I have been turning over a volume of Lamartine. I like the "Hymn to the Nightingale," and many of his "Harmonies" besides, but they are far from moving me, as his "Meditations" did once. I used to be enchanted, lifted out of myself, as I read them; I was only sixteen, and they were so beautiful! Time changes everything. The great poet cannot stir my heart any more; he could not even interest me to-day. . . . But it is not good for me to write in this temper—to diffuse my own unrest. I will put by books and pens; I know something better; I have tried it a hundred times; it is prayer, prayer that calms me.

' *The 7th.*—What shall I tell you to-day? that

it rains, that the sky absolutely will not smile on us? I am afraid May will leave us without sunshine, without flowers, without verdure. The woods are like winter—gaunt and bare. . . . But if we lack some things, those we enjoy are very sweet, and I bless God for them every day; every day I am glad to be in the midst of trees, and waters, and meadows, and sheep, and hens that lay, to live in my bonny and peaceful Cayla with those I love. . . . We only miss you. When will you come? Are we to live all our lives apart? I am sorry, but we must resign ourselves to what God wills or permits. One day we shall know all; one day I shall know why we are separated, we two who would fain be together. My friend, let us draw near in heart and thought by writing to each other. This correspondence is necessary for both of us—for you in the world, and for me in my solitude.

‘*The 9th.*—A day spent in the bleaching-ground does not give me much to tell. Still, it is very pretty to spread the white linen on the grass, and to see it floating on the lines. I can fancy myself Homer’s Nausicaa, if I please, or one of those

princesses in the Bible who washed the tunics of their brothers. We have a large washing-pool at the Moulinasse, which you have not seen; it is full of water, and beautiful in the fresh green hollow, where the birds delight to come and sing.

‘Our Cayla is much altered, and alters every day. You will not see the white pigeon-house on the slope, nor the little wicket to the terrace, nor the corridor, nor the old casement, where we measured our height when we were children. They are all gone, and have given place to large windows and large rooms. These new things are pleasant enough, but I regret the old, and, in my heart, I still see the doors and the walls that have been removed. My feet do not take kindly to the new stairs, but trip and stumble where they did not run quite little. Whose coffin will go out first at these new doors? But, new or old, all are wide enough for that.

‘*The 10th.*—A letter to Louise, my prayers, and household duties have occupied the whole day. As I was lifting a kettle off the kitchen fire, papa said that he did not like to see me do such things; but I bethought me of St. Bonaventura, who was

washing the dishes of his convent when they came to bring him, I think, his cardinal's hat. In this world there is nothing low but sin, which degrades us in the eyes of God. Thus my kettle helped me to a salutary reflection, which will serve me against the annoyance of doing certain disagreeable things, such as blacking my hands in the kitchen. . . . Good-night: to-morrow morning I am going to confession. The north wind has blown all day; our labourers shiver in the fields. It is winter still in the month of May!'

III

It was winter still in the month of May in Paris as well as at Le Cayla; and the next news of Maurice was that he had had a relapse, and was waiting only for warm weather and strength enough to set out on his journey home. He was able to start in June, and in July, after a long rest by the way at Les Coques, the house of Madame de Maistre, a friend near Nevers, he reached Le Cayla, in good spirits at getting there, but so haggard, weak, and worn out, that he was hardly

recognisable. Soon after his arrival he had a second relapse, so severe, that Eugénie did not dare to look her fears in the face; but after awhile the sun, sweet air, and lovingkindness of home began to revive the poor young man, and he put on something of his former self again.

And now Maurice had certain confidences for his father and sisters—tender confidences of a new love, a pretty little Indian lady of seventeen, Caroline de Gervain, whom he had met in the gayest circles of Paris society, and whom he proposed to marry. Their affection was mutual, her fortune was considerable, her family good, her person charming; there was, in fact, no obstacle except Maurice's health to justify his friends in withholding their sanction from a formal engagement. It was given, therefore; and in September, Maurice's betrothed came to Le Cayla with an aunt, who was also her guardian.

The arrival of these fashionable guests quite upset the simple life of Eugénie and her sister. All day long something must be done to amuse them—music, singing, riding, walking, dressing, visiting. Caroline was a sweet, happy-tempered

girl, with a delicate face, great blue eyes, a lovely figure, a tiny foot, and an air of exquisite grace. She was as merry as a lark in the unaccustomed freedom of the country, and fancied she would like to live always in the woods and fields. Everybody admired her, everybody loved her, and was at her service. Maurice was, of course, all devotion; Éran, who was gay himself, was ever ready to promote a scheme of pleasure, and the cheerful Marie was ever ready to aid; while Eugénie gave up a promised visit to Rayssac, and, snatching a few minutes to write to Louise on Sunday, declares that it is only then she has any leisure left at her own disposal.

In October, however, when leaves began to fall and mud to impede the lanes, the guests winged their flight back to Paris, and Le Cayla settled down again into its natural sober routine. Maurice was by this time much stronger, better, and hopefuller, both in health and in worldly prospects; but he gave Eugénie perhaps bitterer heartaches than ever before. His religious duties were all neglected; he went no more to church nor to confession, and his lips had forgotten how to pray.

His philosophies had swept him far out of the reach of her widest sympathy; and though a good priest, to whom she confided her secret solicitude, endeavoured to comfort her with the assurance that her brother would ultimately return to the faith and convictions of his earlier years, she underwent many an hour of fear and anguish that were past all human comfort. But nothing ever any more shook her abounding love. Maurice remained at home until the worst of the winter was over; then, as soon as the new year opened, he began to make his preparations for going back to Paris and hard work. A fortnight of severe frost delayed him longer than he wished; but, at last, on the 26th of January, he bade farewell to Le Cayla. His father, his brother, his sisters followed him down the hill; and at the foot of the Cross where the roads divided, they said good-bye. When he was lost to sight, Eugénie hurried to church to pray for him who now never prayed for himself; and in the evening she retired alone to her pleasant sanctum (his during his visit), to write to him in her journal:—

'January 26, 1838.—I am come into this dear little room where you still were this morning. How lonely it feels, how empty! I see you everywhere, but nowhere can I find you. There are your slippers under the bed, your table all furnished, your mirror hanging from its nail, the books that you were reading last night before you went to bed, and myself, who kissed you, touched you, looked at you. What a world this is, whence everything disappears! Maurice, dear Maurice, oh! what need I have of you and of God! When you were gone, I went to church, where I could weep and pray at my ease. What do you do, you who never pray, when you are sorrowful, when your heart is broken? As for me, I feel that I want more than human consolation. I must have God for my friend when I suffer because of one whom I love.

'What has happened to-day that I can tell you? Nothing, nothing but your departure. I have seen nothing else before my eyes ever since but you as you left us, and the Cross where we said good-bye. If the king had come, I should not have heeded him, but no one came except Jeannot,

leading back your horses. I was at the window, and I moved away ; it looked like a funeral returning.

‘It is evening now, the end of a very long, very mournful day. Good night! You can almost hear me, you are not yet so very far off; but to-morrow and the day after to-morrow you will be farther and farther still.

‘*February 2, Friday.*—It is a week since you left us, and just the same hour. I am going down the road where we parted. This is Candlemas Day, and I am setting off to mass with my taper. . . .

‘We have just got home from Andillac with a letter from Félicité ; there was one also for you, from Caroline, which I re-posted, after slipping in a word for that dear little sister. I may call her so now ; it is only anticipating by a few months, I hope. But who knows ? My heart is always in fear for that affair and for you, bad builder of happiness that you are ! I dread lest you may not complete it, lest you may drop the last link of the chain that would unite you for ever. . . .
For ever seems to terrify you, independent, vaga-

bond eagle! How shall we prevail on you to settle in your nest?

‘This is not my only homily. God knows how much I find in you to vex and distress me. If from your heart, I pass to your soul, oh! it is there—*there!* . . . But what profit have I in speaking, in complaining? I am not holy enough to convert you, nor learned enough to convince. God alone can do it. I beseech it of Him, for my own bliss depends on yours. You cannot imagine it, perhaps; with your philosophical eyes, you cannot see the tears of a Christian, weeping for a soul in peril, the soul of a brother ardently beloved.

‘The day is ending with snow. I shall be thankful to hear of you at your journey’s end now the cold has returned; provided you take no harm in your long walks, that your chest ails nothing, and that M. d’Aurevilly does not keep you up too late of nights, detailing his many worries. . . .

‘Amongst some scraps of paper I have just come upon my first bit of poetry, and I leave it between these pages for you. I shall preserve everything

that I should show you if you were here. That you are *not* here I can hardly realise yet. I keep saying to myself that soon you will be coming in.

'The 6th.—I could have filled several pages with the thoughts that came into my heart to-day, and you would have liked them. But Augustine, who had no one at the parsonage, arrived early to spend the day. The little maid generally enlivens me, but this morning she must have found me very grave and pre-occupied. I took my distaff for amusement, but all as I spun, my fancy spun and wound and turned her wheel. I was not there at all; the spirit sets this machine of the body to work, and then it flies. Whither does it go? Where was mine to-day? God knows, and you can guess; I never leave you long, not even when I am reading those beautiful sermons of Bossuet that you taught me to admire so many years ago. I find them full of things that apply to you now. Oh! you should continue to read them!

'The 8th.—Letters, letters from Paris, and one from you! You arrived well, welcome and happy! God be praised! I can think of nothing else; I

tell everybody, "Maurice has written to us; he accomplished his journey successfully, and had fine weather all the way," and a hundred things besides that come into my mind.

'And here the weather is fine too; it is a beautiful day, the air mild, the sky clear; if we did not miss the leaves, we might fancy ourselves in the month of May. When nature is so radiant, the spirit is cheered, and anticipates some pleasant event. It is impossible, I thought to myself in my walk this morning, but that some bit of good luck should be going to happen, and I have your letter. So I did not delude myself.

'One is so glad over a letter! one's heart feasts on the familiar writing! But after awhile the gladness passes, and one is low again; a letter, after all, is but a little thing in the place of somebody. We are never satisfied, all our pleasures fall short of our desires. God wills it, God wills it thus, that we may never find the fulness of joy till we find it with eternal reunion in heaven.'

IV

MAURICE was back in Paris with his gay little lady-love and his work. The first news of his health that reached home was favourable, and Eugénie continued her journal in better spirits, omitting no event of moment that diversified the still life of Le Cayla, and no pious reflections that might do him good. The chronicle of her days would be very meagre now, but for the beautiful thoughts that add a grace to every occasion. Her father was often in ill-health; Mimi had many friends, who claimed her for frequent visits, and Éran too. Éran was the liveliest member of the family—popular with both men and women, indefatigable at a dance, indispensable at every party of pleasure within miles round Le Cayla. Invitations for balls came for Eugénie too, but they were always declined; as well knock at a convent door as at hers, she said. For weeks and months together her farthest journey was to mass; and when she took a longer flight to see her cousins at Gaillac and Alby, she was never perfectly at rest until she got

back to her dear, delightful, solitary home. Her tastes were simple, and placed her in accord with the simplest people. Even in her young days, when the imagination may be forgiven for soaring, she had never dreamed of greatness or wealth, but only of a little house out of the way of the traffick-ing world, where the pine-wood furniture was to be exquisitely clean, and the pots and pans bur-nished like glass ; where the door was to be trel-lised with roses, and cocks and hens should pecket about the court, where she was to be with some-body—she did not know with whom—but with somebody good, and not at all rough or unkind. Long ago she had given up even this modest castle in the air, and of late she had come to believe that she was only in the world to serve her father. She had never thought of leaving him save once for a little while, when a convent tempted her with visions of perpetual prayer and quiet, and now that desire had forsaken her too ; she even felt that it would be impossible to tear herself from the duties and affections of home, though it were to go to Maurice in Paris. And *that* had been a secretly cherished aspiration for many years. So

long as his hopes and strivings for fame endured, she too had laid out her schemes of literary work—‘Songs for Children,’ and so forth; but her ambition, always against her conscience, had died out with his, and now to love and do good was all she lived for.

And there is a tender touch in the most trivial circumstance that she records; the poetry of common life is always open to her vision: of a rude and ignorant peasant neighbour she makes quite a pathetic picture:—

‘Romiguières has been to spend the evening with us, to warm himself at our fire, to talk of asses and sheep, and, what amused me most, to show us his papers, to learn his age; he was seven years wrong. Happy man, not to know how old he is! The lives of these peasants flow on like a stream, with never a thought of how long they have been flowing. They have their epochs, however, though they do not date them like us. They say to you, “I was born when that field was in wheat; I was married when that tree was planted, when that house was built;”

and fine large registers they are. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre makes Virginie speak so, and I myself have heard it a hundred times at Andillac and here. For simple nature is everywhere the same.'

The innocent pleasures and surprises of children were always sweet to Eugénie, who had a mother's heart for the poorest; while to the aged, the sick, or those in misery, she and Mimi were true Sisters of Charity. Thus in her journal she relates for Maurice the death of his good old nurse:—

'*March 16.*—*La Vialarette* will bring you no more chestnuts nor simnel-cakes from Cordes: poor old woman, she died last night! I regret her for her excellent qualities, her fidelity, her attachment to us all. Were any of us ill? she was there; were we in need of help? she was ready; and then so discreet, so safe! one of the few persons to whom we could confide a secret. I would have told her anything: education had not taught her the religious obligation of a secret, but she knew it, none better, none more perfectly.

'Amongst the women of Andillac no other was like her for high feeling, for strong and lively

faith. It was good to hear her speak out plain and clear to the village philosophers who made a mock at God, derided confession, and every pious duty, in their ale-house debates. Oh! she loved God's service well! she confessed, fasted, believed in heaven, and is there, I trust. God will have received that pure and simple soul. Her faults were but sallies of temper, quips of character, that now and then set her wrong with her neighbours; but an act of kindness soon rubbed out the memory of the sharp word, and now all speak her praises.

'I went to see her last evening, but she did not know me. I took her hand, which was cold and pulseless: when I came away, I knew that I had seen her for the last time. How sad, how dark, how terrible must be the passage into the other life, when God does not shed His light, His hopes upon it! Happy they who can say, like La Viarette, "I have known the Lord, and I have served Him!" Her knowledge did not go beyond the Catechism, nor her prayers beyond "*Our Father*," but all wisdom is contained in them for the Christian, whether gentle or simple. Would

to God that M. de Lamennais had stopped there too!

‘Marie served our poor friend as Sister of Charity, and by her exhortations helped her to suffer in patience. The dying woman committed to her the fulfilment of her last wishes, told her what masses were to be said for the repose of her soul, and gave her sixty francs to pay for them which she had kept hidden in a faggot of fire-wood, a faggot gathered stick by stick as the money sou by sou. What cold, what heat, what weary steps, what pains, what privations it represents! Surely it is an offering acceptable to God! How many a loaf of bread must she have withheld from her hunger to give the price of it to her soul! Holy thought of poverty! Simple and admirable faith!

‘*The 17th.*—I have just come back from the burial of our poor old friend, the first I have ever seen laid in the grave. It is painful to see, but I wished to follow her who had neither brother nor sister of her own—to follow her who had followed to the same place all of our house whom she had tended in death, who had taken so many steps for

each one of us. I wished to give her this mark of affection, and to accompany her with my prayers to the confines of the other world. I heard mass by her coffin. .

‘There was a time when all this would have terrified me; now, I cannot tell how, I find it quite natural to die; coffins, corpses, grave-yards only kindle my faith and lift my soul heaven-wards. The thing that most struck me was the sound of the bier falling into the pit; a dull and dismal noise, the last of mortality. Oh! how it pierces, how it sinks deep into the heart that listens for it! But all do not listen; the sexton heard it as if it were but a tree that fell; little Cotive and some other children peeped down with bright astonished faces, as if they were peeping into a ditch where they might find flowers. My God! my God! what indifference surrounds the tomb! The saints are right to die before their hour, and to perform their own obsequies as they retire from the world! Is it worth while lingering in it? No, it is not worth while, if it were not for a few dear souls to whom God wills that we shall keep company in life. There is papa,

who has just been to see me in my room, and has left me with two kisses on my forehead. How could one forsake so tender a father ?'

V

EUGÉNIE had now in Paris a better correspondent than her brother, in Caroline de Gervain, who wrote to her about Maurice, so dear to them both, with a pleasant fulness of detail. Her February news was excellent, and Eugénie makes a note of it in her journal, with the thoughts that rose naturally out of it:—

'Feb. 17.—A letter from Caroline. What a pleasure to know you so much beloved, so well cared for, with only the street to cross to reach your bedroom! No more cold, no more fears, no more of those dragons that I imagined always at your heels in Paris! God be thanked! I am tranquil now. I see in all this the hand of Providence guiding everything for your good. And yet you do not love God! His cares for you shine in my eyes like diamonds. See, dear, what has happened to better your sorry position—these

unhoped-for succours, this family affection, this mother, this sister, more than a sister, so loving, so sweet, so pretty, who promises you such bliss ! Do you not recognise some Divine hand at work laying out your life for you ? We may hope a happier future for you now than the past—that past which has given us so much pain. But we have all our term of tribulation, of misfortune, of servitude in Egypt, before we come to the manna and the promised land.’

But these pious congratulations were out of date before they reached poor Maurice, who, in March, had another bad attack of cold and fever. Letters due at Le Cayla on certain days did not arrive, and silence soon bred suspense, then anxiety, then dread. At last, on the 24th, there came a letter, not from Maurice, not from Caroline, but from M. d’Aureville, and the seal was black. It fell from Eugénie’s hand as she tried to open it, and Éran took it up, read the first lines, and gave it back to her. It was not what she thought—not tidings of death, but the cruel shock of the moment left a permanent terror on her mind—and it told

her that Maurice had been very ill. On the 27th, a letter from Caroline to Éran confirmed the bad news, and deepened its effect with a warning not to alarm his sisters; and on the 28th another letter from Caroline's good aunt gave them many particulars unsuspected before—that from his return to Paris Maurice had never looked otherwise than pale, jaded, and out of spirits. Eugénie guessed the secret root of his bitterness—his soul was sick; and in the midst of his seeming happiness, he was unhappy, and ill at ease with himself and with God.

Every delay of the post was now a fresh alarm at Le Cayla, and when looked-for letters failed to come, M. de Guérin would set out and walk to Andillac, to enquire if, by chance, the postman had not left some behind. Even when other friends wrote that Maurice was recovered again, his father was still in doubt, still feared himself deceived; and Caroline, more open because more interested than the rest, told Eugénie that he was always sad with a sadness no loving wiles of hers could dissipate. Eugénie's heart ached and trembled for them both. Was not Maurice content, then,

with his beautiful betrothed, so fond, so devoted to him? Was it from Le Cayla that he had carried away the cause of his profound depression? But she dared not seek nor question too far—she had her presentiments.

Maurice was evidently not content with his share of the world—not content, and never to be content—for he was already wearing away from it. His fluctuating principles had temporarily alienated some of his dearest and best friends—François de Marzan, Élie de Kertanguy, M. de la Morvonnois; and now his gay comrade, Paul de Quemper, was away—was gone to America. He had filled the blank of their absence with others, to the chief amongst whom he addressed those thoughts and confidences which once belonged only to Eugénie; and for all the show of change that years and philosophies had wrought in him, he might be still the same poetic, restless visionary who haunted the woods of La Chênaie and the wild heaths of Ploërmel. He might be writing in the Green Note-book—

‘April 11, 1838.—Yesterday an attack of fever

in all its phases; to-day faintness, debility, exhaustion. They have just opened the windows; the sky is clear, the sun magnificent. Ah! why am I not sitting in the shade of the forests? You laugh at this exclamation, because as yet the trees have not put forth the very earliest of those buds that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre calls drops of verdure. But, perhaps, in the heart of the woods, in the season when life is flowing to the extremity of every branch, I might receive some benefit, and have my part in the abounding fruitfulness and warmth. I come back, as you see, to my ancient imaginings on the things of Nature; it is the invincible tendency of my spirit, a sort of passion, which throws me into fits of enthusiasm, makes me weep, makes me glad, gives me eternal food for dreaming.'

The swallows came, the green leaves, the May flowers, the nightingale that sang below Eugénie's window where she wrote, but to Maurice came no health, no rejuvenescence. The balmy June went over, the golden harvest was reaped in the fields at home, but Maurice was still sick, still weary

and sad at heart. Thus he writes to his friend again in July :—

‘*Tuesday evening, July 10.*—The sky this evening is worthy of Greece. And what are we doing in these beautiful gala days of air and light? I am all uneasy, and know not to what I would turn me: these long quiet days give me no sense of calm. The sun and pure expanse bring me all manner of strange thoughts, that vex my soul. I see further into the infinite, and the limits that I cannot see beyond are more cruel than ever. What do I know, indeed? but I will not recite you my sorrows; it is an old song, that I have almost tired you to sleep with.

‘I have been musing to-day on the little use we make of our lives; I do not speak of ambition—it is so vulgar a thing now-a-days, and men are plagued with such absurd dreams that one may be proud of one’s idleness, and amongst so many brilliant geniuses, thankful for one’s halo of obscurity. . . .’

Yet the halo of obscurity hid a crown of thorns

—impossible but that disappointment pricked Maurice sharply, when he could write:—

‘I shall never bring anything excellent out of this accursed head of mine; nevertheless, I am sure it holds what is not without price. My destiny is that of the pearl in the oyster, in depths of ocean. How many, and of the finest water, that will never be drawn into the light!’

VI

THERE had lately come over Maurice’s engagement a cloud of doubt and uncertainty, arising from pecuniary reverses which affected Caroline’s fortune, but towards the end of July the cloud dispersed, and their marriage was finally fixed for the autumn. A letter from M. Auguste Reynaud begged for Eugénie’s company on the occasion. At first Eugénie thought it quite out of the question that she could go, but, before her hearty desire to be present at the ceremony, difficulties vanished, and her preparations were begun with lively delight. On her way to Paris it was

arranged that she should stay for awhile with her brother's good friend, Madame de Maistre, at Nevers; with whom, though they had never met, she kept up a diligent correspondence.

Before Eugénie could leave the South, however, there was one visit she must needs pay—a visit to Louise at Rayssac. Louise was in affliction; her father had died suddenly, her brother had married a great lady at a distance, and was coming to take possession of his inheritance, and what changes were impending for herself she could not yet see. Her dear friend's position set Eugénie reflecting upon her own—if *her* father were gone, what manner of wife would Érembert bring to Le Cayla? Would she and Mimi be still permitted to feel at home there, or would they be put to the door to find them a shelter in a convent, as she had twice seen happen to daughters when death removed the head of the family? The idea of it saddened her for a little while, but not for long did Eugénie ever suffer painful future contingencies to distress her mind.

It was on the last day of August that she set

out for the mountains, and her journal to Maurice tells the story of her visit in full.

‘*Rayssac, September 4.*—I have been four days at Rayssac, enjoying all the pleasures of friendship and the mountains. Talking with Louise, walking this way and that, have kept me so busy that I have not had a moment to write to you. I have only replied to Marie,* that other friend who makes me imagine another Rayssac at Les Coques. I discern many points of resemblance between Louise and Marie: the same ardent and lofty character, the same devotedness, the same high and clear intelligence, the same affection for me. To be beloved by them, oh! whence comes that singular happiness of mine?

‘A walk, a pilgrimage, half-riding, half on foot, to St. Jean de Jannes, a little church buried in the hills like a hermit’s cell in Lebanon. We found a pretty statue of the Virgin there, and a picture of St. Jean full of expression and naturalness. It is rare to meet with so fine a work of art in the country. Here the houses are poor and

* Madame de Maistre.

the churches rich ; faith makes these mountain-folk, who are eminently believing, understand that it is better to adorn the house of God than their own, the eternal habitation than the dwelling of a day. In these hills and valleys, where my imagination is so well content, my heart also has found its tender memories—the paths you traversed three or four years ago. How many things have happened since then !

‘ *The 5th.*—Never write at night if you wish to be read ! This morning I see how I scribbled in the dusk, but between us it may pass ; you will forgive my bad writing as I forgive your not writing at all, which is much worse, to my thinking. Reading “*La France Pittoresque*,” I have learnt that the Nivernais was inhabited in Cæsar’s time by the Vadicasses and Roji, that the people of Nièvre are hospitable, that amongst its antiquities there is a statue of a queen with a webbed foot, and in a marble quarry at Clamecy somebody once found a woman’s hand, the bones of which had changed into turquoises. . . .

‘ But for Louise, who has dropped on my page as a butterfly alights on a flower, I should have

A well furnished and rising half in foot-
ing of 2000 acres, a little church built in
the 18th century and a school in Lebanon. We
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‘ But for Louise, who has dropped on my page as a butterfly alights on a flower, I should have

gone on writing I know not what, but nothing worth to me the things we said talking together as friends, heart to heart, low-voiced, familiar. This is an anniversary : it is of you I am thinking now, of you pale, almost dying, as you were on this day last year, and raised again as by a miracle—a true miracle of healing, for which I am going to return thanks at church. . . .

‘A sight to make the heart bleed—a poor mad woman rushed like a whirlwind into the church, cast herself on her knees before the tabernacle and sang a hymn to the Eucharist. It was pathetic, that holy frenzy, that delirious adoration of God, the only love left her. She will be happy one day, when her reason comes to her again in heaven, and she sees that the highest wisdom is still to love what she loved in her insane ecstasy. . . . I must go now and make acquaintance with Madame de Bayne, who has just arrived with her suite from Toulouse. . . .

‘She is a gentle and good little woman, but silent and timid, leaving one to guess her accomplishments and the fine qualities of her heart and mind. She paints, draws, is musical, embroiders

a great deal, and thus she has charmed our mountain rusticity. This is quite a new kind of home for her, and would feel very strange after the gay world if she had not what softens the most abrupt passages of life. These are the reflections that occur to me on the position of this young wife, coming almost from a court. The contrast of the past and the present has struck me.

‘Louise has been telling me that where others see nothing I find ever so much to say. “You could say a hundred things about *this*,” she said. It was only the latch of the door she was raising as she went out of the room. Surely, there would be much to say and to think about that bit of iron, which so many hands have touched, which has been lifted and dropped in such different moods, under so many eyes, by so many masters, for so many days and years. Oh! the history of a door-latch would be long!

‘I am leaving to-morrow. Poor Louise, how we both regret it! The end of everything is pain. We were all joy a week ago. All joy? no; for a thought of mourning mingled with it; we remembered her poor father, and talked of

him often; I have missed him at Rayssac, he was so good, and such excellent company. I came to the house as if I were coming to a funeral; but I found other guests, and our walks and talks soon diverted my serious thoughts. Our moods change and change again, like the sky itself.

'*The 12th.*—At seven o'clock I kissed her and left her weeping in her bed. What true friendship there was in her good-bye, the clasp of her hand, the *Come again*, and the fall of her voice that tears choked! Poor dear Louise, I had the strength to leave her and not to fret at all. Tears are not near my eyes. But what matter? I love as much as others, and what springs from the heart is well worth what flows from the eyes. But Louise is tender—she loves and she weeps. She is sorry to lose me, she needs a friend; she told me her trials, her prospects, perhaps her illusions: a woman always has an illusion or two.'

It was the shooting season now, and when Eugénie returned to Le Cayla the house was every day astir with guests, coming and going, some for

their sport, some to pay an annual visit, some to bid her good-bye before she left home for her far travels to Paris. There were twelve at dinner one day, fifteen another—leading, as she wrote to Maurice, a real country-house life of the olden times. On the 29th of September it came to an end for her. That morning she went to church to hear a mass for her safe journey which the curé said specially; received the hand-shakes and blessings of her humble friends at Andillac, and later in the day took a farewell, that was to last the winter, of home, of father, sister, brother, and all the dear and pleasant delights that made Le Cayla the happiest place in all the world to her.

VII

THE journey from Le Cayla to Paris, taking Nevers on the road, was long and tedious in those days before railways, but by the middle of October, Eugénie de Guérin found herself safely housed in the quiet, pleasant quarter, where Caroline de Gervain resided with her aunt. Maurice met her at the diligence, and the tears rose to his

eyes at the sight of her in this cruel wild Paris that was destroying him. They went to mass together at the church of St. Sulpice on the morning of her arrival; and then came the cousins Auguste Reynaud and his wife Félicité, to bid her welcome, and Maurice's friends of these latter days to make her acquaintance. The marriage was fixed for November 15, and the interval was one round of visits, here, there, everywhere; to churches, palaces, parks, and of these Eugénie wrote to Le Cayla cheerfully. Her distinction and elegance gave her at once her due place in society, and of the great world and the literary world she had a very pleasant glimpse; but she was sad in the midst of all her gaiety, for Maurice looked painfully fragile, though he would not acknowledge feeling amiss, and only made light of her anxieties when she entreated him to be careful of himself.

Only to Louise de Bayne could Eugénie open her heart. 'Oh! what mourning I see in this marriage!' she writes to her sweet friend at Rayssac. 'I talk of it to no one but you, yet what fears, what presentiments oppress me!

When I am with others, I imitate their liveliness, but at church and alone, I think my own thoughts. I have everything I could wish for; they all love me here; I ought to be happy, but I am weary in spirit, and I say to myself that happiness is nowhere in this world. Write to Marie sometimes, she will like it, and so will papa, but do not mention Maurice's health. I have said nothing to disquiet them, and perhaps it may improve. I hope in his youth, and in the goodness of God.'

On November 5, Érembert de Guérin arrived in Paris to assist at his brother's wedding, and on the 8th, Maurice wrote to announce the coming event to his old friend M. de la Morvonnois. His tone is not enthusiastic.

'My life has been very unsettled these late years. I have been often ill, I have travelled, I have forced myself to disentangle many hard knots, and few men have been more harassed and hindered in their career. But all this draws to an end, and I may say that I have now a future in prospect, that will recompense me for troubles

past. On the 15th of this month I am to marry a young girl who, if we consider probabilities, was not born for me, but whom Fortune, who loves surprises, has thrown into my arms from far-off India. Thanks to this odd caprice of my fate, my life will henceforth be easier, and I shall at last find the leisure that I have so long coveted.'

And as Maurice wrote, he looked, felt, acted. Everyone else was busy, was interested, but he was quite passive, and watched with admirable calmness while others made ready the warm nest that Providence was giving him. The marriage was celebrated in the little church of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and was garnished with many friends. There was great pomp of music, and the good old Abbé Buquet, Maurice's master at Stanislas, blessed his union; the bride was lovely under her crown and veil, the bridegroom handsome and distinguished; the dinner was gay and the dance was gay, but Eugénie had always that terrible secret pain and dread in her heart.

And they were not there without reason. Writ-

ing to Louise a fortnight after the marriage, she tells her that Maurice is ill again, very ill, and the pretty tender little wife is a sick nurse before the honeymoon has waned. 'She deserves all my love, and she has it,' Maurice said of her, and it is touching to read of the young girl wedded to sorrow, and cherishing it as her only joy.

Eugénie left Paris in December, and heard her Christmas bells at Nevers, 'Nevers the dismal,' she calls it, but early in the New Year she returned to Paris and to Maurice. The history of the winter and spring is all contained in her letters to Louise, and the pith of it is still the same:— 'Maurice is pale, is thin, is sleepless, feverish, without appetite. Oh, my God! shall we have to give up this beloved brother?' She planned for him to go to Le Cayla with his wife, but Maurice shrank from the fatigues of the journey, and Éran went home alone, leaving her still in Paris. In April, however, she was able to pay a second visit to Nevers, and to bid him good-bye in better hopes; but all such hopes were delusive; from week to week the news of him varied, and in sending it on to Louise, she says pathetically: 'Pity

me, my dear friend ; do better, pray for me and for him. Our best hope is in God.'

Yet still she goes on writing her journal in absence, the journal that Maurice was never to read.

'NEVERS, *April 10, 1839.*

'Eight days, eight years, eight ages, I know not how long since I left you—it seems an endless time in my weariness, my dear, my poor sick brother ! Is it well with you, or better, or worse ? The weather is lovely here to-day, the air full of sunshine and the breath of flowers. It would do you good ; the spring is more healing than medicines. I say this hopefully, alone in my hermit's cell with one chair, a cross, and a table under a little window where I write. From time to time I look at the sky, and hear the bells of Nevers and the feet of the people in the street. Never was there a gloomier, more desolate city ! Even Marie and her children cannot beguile its dulness. I have tried everything, even my distaff, which I have not brought out till now since I left Le Cayla. I was glad to see it again, and to spin a little ; but spinning I spun so many things besides—

nothing, however, that prevailed against my ennui. Let it abide then, that inexorable ennui, that ground of human life. To endure it, and to endure oneself, is the wisest of all things.'

Between this entry in her journal and the next, Eugénie received a letter from Maurice, the last he wrote ; we give it entire.

'PARIS, *April 8, 1839.*

'Rain and cold must have gone with you all the way on your journey, my dear friend ; they tell me every day the weather was wretched. But now, as I write, I have the consolation of thinking that for two days past you have enjoyed the pleasures of rest after fatigue. In that assurance my vagrant imagination has abandoned the road to Nevers, to follow Éran on the road to Toulouse, always with the same cortège "of wind, of cold, and of rain." Poor Éran ! he bade me good-bye with an emotion that touched me deeply. This journey to Paris, and all that has befallen in these few months, has drawn us closer together (Éran and me) than twenty years had been able to do. We have always lived far away

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from each other, and our characters were not of a kind to obviate the effects of absence. Events have hastened what was sure to happen sooner or later, at the age to which we are come, and we parted with a kind feeling the more in our hearts. In truth, good comes out of everything; it is like a fine gold dust, of which everywhere there lurks some atom. . . .

‘I live very peacefully under my curtains, waiting with patience, thanks to Caro’s cares, to books and dreams, the recovery that the sunshine is to bring me. I enjoy this almost complete sequestration from the world: for I am not so averse to solitude as you may fancy; and there are in me, very strong in me, tastes and cravings that the most ardent lovers of country life would not disavow. I hope that God will cause to ripen at the same time these thoughts and the means of realising them.

‘M. Buquet came to see me the day you left, only a few hours after you were gone. And he came again yesterday to *talk* with me as you wished. He is to pay me another visit next week, and I hope all will go on for the better.

‘I do not suffer quite so much from my throat. I sleep pretty well, and eat sweets, a primitive taste of mine, as you know.

‘Your letter will no doubt cross mine on the road, and bring to all of us news of your journey. Tell my friends, the ladies at Les Coques, how impatient I am for your news, and give them the invalid’s, who will keep the promise he made to their solicitude, which is very dear to him.’

Eugénie takes up her pen again to comment, in her journal, on this pleasant letter.

‘*The 14th.*—Your letter has done me good—you sleep now, your appetite improves, your throat is less sore. God grant it may continue so! Oh, how I pray for your dear health, and as much for your soul’s health as the health of your body! I know not whether they be good prayers, these prayers of our human affection, striving with the will of God. I long that my brother should recover; that is my anchor, but an anchor, I think, of trust, faith, and resignation. Prayer is a desire submitted. *Give us our daily bread, keep us from evil, Thy will be done.* The Saviour

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 aks, and a lark, soaring vorage
 clear and sweet, a very master ake
 inged minstrels.

'The 18th.—I am here in my winter room
 again, whence I see sky and water; the Loire, the
 white winding Loire, which surrounds us. I like
 it better than the roofs of Nevers. My love for
 the fields is at ease and revels in this immensity;
 but the pleasure is of the eyes only. I do not go
 abroad, but my imagination flies far and wide.
 I have made the circuit of Bourbonnais, of Berry.
 I have rested enraptured on the mountains of
 Auvergne, their peaks so snowy, their slopes so
 fresh, green, fertile, and flowery. I seek Mon-
 taigu, whence we Guérins came, whence so many
 knights set forth to fight in the Holy Land and
 elsewhere; whence the Bishop of Senlis went to
 order the battle of Bouvines (the setting in array
 of that battle is attributed to Guérin, Bishop of

in the garden of Olivet did but this, not willing, but obedient. In this acceptation, in this free union of the human will with the Divine will, lies the most sublime act of us poor mortals, the fulfilment of faith, the closest participation in that grace which flows thus from God to man, and works wonders. Hence the miracles of healing which form a part of the power of the saints who are one with God, *perfect in unity*, as St. Paul says. This is why Marie, believing and loving, has caused a *neuvaine* * to be made for you at Nevers. She has charged her father with it, the good old man who will join us, your sister and your friend.

‘*At Les Coques.*—Peace, calm, solitude, the life that I love beginning again. Nevers wearied me with its little great world, its little great ladies, its tedious dinners, fine clothes, formal visits and fatigues without compensation. After Paris, where, at least, extremes meet, Nevers is poor indeed! The country, nothing but the country, suits me.

‘Our caravan left Nevers on Monday at noon,

* Nine days’ prayer.

just the hour when it is pleasantest to walk in the bright April sun. With what joy I saw the green springing corn, the budding trees, the hedges hung with weeds and wild flowers like the hedges of Le Cayla! There were violets on the mossy banks, and a lark, soaring to the sky, sang out clear and sweet, a very master among the winged minstrels.

‘*The 18th.*—I am here in my winter room again, whence I see sky and water; the Loire, the white winding Loire, which surrounds us. I like it better than the roofs of Nevers. My love for the fields is at ease and revels in this immensity; but the pleasure is of the eyes only. I do not go abroad, but my imagination flies far and wide. I have made the circuit of Bourbonnais, of Berry. I have rested enraptured on the mountains of Auvergne, their peaks so snowy, their slopes so fresh, green, fertile, and flowery. I seek Montaignu, whence we Guérins came, whence so many knights set forth to fight in the Holy Land and elsewhere; whence the Bishop of Senlis went to order the battle of Bouvines (the setting in array of that battle is attributed to Guérin, Bishop of

Senlis, in some chronicle of the time that I have read). I make a tour of the lands and domains of our forefathers. I see the herding of the cattle and the sheep; I see the streams flowing, the woods growing green; I see all they saw except the masters—poor wretches at Le Cayla now, hard-up for a livelihood. But we have seen kings schoolmasters. Reverses are of all times, in all families; and the caprices of fortune are not the worst of calamities when one knows how to bear them.

‘*The 20th.*—I have nothing to read, I will write therefore, do something to fix my attention, to occupy me. I have not work enough for my hands. I cannot embroider or sew muslin, I can only knit, and even my stocking has slipped away from me. Marie is making music in the parlour below, and I feel something in my head that keeps time and answers her. *Oh, yes, I have something there!* What shall I do? A little book where I might set my thoughts in a frame, my points of view, my sentiments on this and that; I would throw all my force into it. If you were here I could consult you, and you would tell

me what I ought to do, and what would be worth doing. Then we would sell it, and I should have money to come and see you again in Paris. I am not thinking of fame, I vow; my name should not appear. We should succeed perhaps. M. Andryane and M. Xavier de Maistre encourage my confidence with words that are fit to make my pen fly like an arrow. But where aim? An end, an end! Come that, and I shall be tranquil, I shall repose in it.

‘The bird seeking its branch, the bee seeking its flower, the river seeking the sea, all fly, run to their rest. Thus, my God, is it with my soul until it finds its flower, its branch, its outlet. It will find them all in heaven, and all in infinitely perfect order; in heaven, the place of souls, intellectual cravings will be satisfied. I believe it, I hope it! Without that, I could not comprehend existence; for in this world, the shadow of the other, we see only a shadow of felicity.

‘*The 24th.*—How smiling all is to-day, the sun how joyous, the air how sweet and buoyant! A letter, news, good news of my dear, and all is changed for me within and without. *I am happy*

to-day. A word so rare that I underline it. God be thanked for what I hear of your sleep, your appetite, your walk in the Champs-Élysées with Caro, your guiding angel. Your dear good friend, M. d'Aureville, writes me all this with the careful detail of a touching friendship. Always, always I shall be grateful to him for this affectionate service.

'*May 1.*—It is to a lovely May breeze, to the sun rising, to a radiant, balmy morning, that my pen is trotting on this paper. It does one good to expatiate amidst these enchanting scenes of Nature, amidst flowers, birds, and verdure under this wide blue sky of the Nivernais. I love the graceful form of those little white clouds, suspended here and there like cushions of cotton for the eye to rest on in this immensity. Our soul enlarges with what it sees; it changes with its horizon, and reflects it, and I could readily believe that a man dwelling in a confined place would have narrow ideas, or grave or gay, or lively or severe, according to the scenery around him. Each plant belongs to its soil, each flower to its pot, each man to his country. Le Cayla, our

beautiful shut-in home, has held me a long while under its green shadow, and I feel differently now from what I did there. Marie is afraid this will be unlucky for me, but I do not think so; enough of what I was is left to take up again the old life contentedly. Only there will be a new branch, two stems from the same trunk, like those grafted trees of various kinds, which we see bearing different blossoms.

‘*May 3.*—I have neither written, nor wished to write, not even to you, my dear invalid. If this profited you, if I could send it to you, if I could put it into your hand each day, oh! then, nothing would prevent my writing. But that you may never see it, discourages me, checks every flash of imagination. Of what use will be the thoughts I am addressing you, if you cannot read them, when we are severed by I know not what? I shrink from returning to Le Cayla alone. I cannot bear that ever-recurring fear for your health, and so many obstacles besides. Your journey there is so uncertain that I no longer count upon it. God knows when we shall see each other again. My friend, must we live apart,

must this marriage, which I helped to build as a nest for you where I also might come, separate us more than before? I suffer from that now, and in the future? My needs, my affections incline to you more than to any other of my family; I have the misfortune to love you better than anyone else in the world. My youth over, I was to go away with Maurice—that was my object in life. At every age there is happiness in a great affection; the heart takes refuge in it entirely. And that tender enjoyment is not to be your sister's? Then I can only turn me to God to love, as I understand loving.

‘I am going out from here; to try to read and recover my calm. Oh, my God!

‘*The 10th.*—A letter from Caro has made me very anxious, very uneasy about that faintness which one morning prevented your rising. What a bad sign it is, and oh, how I long for your friend's bulletin! Then I shall know how you really are. Thanks to him who tells me everything with detail and with precision, who almost makes me see you.

‘*The 19th.*—A letter from Louise full of in-

terest for you ; charming from beginning to end with kindness and wit, and a way of saying things as they are said nowhere but amongst the rocks of Rayssac. Solitude does it ; ideas come there which are like nothing in the world, strange, pretty as flowers and mosses. Charming Louise, how dearly I love her ! And she is become so calm, so sensible, she who once was full of illusions. "The other day," she writes to me, "I was at La Plâtée, my aunt's parish church ; I drew near to a sister who kneels there from morning till night, and who is much venerated for her sanctity. I lifted a corner of her black veil and whispered : 'My sister, I want to ask your prayers for a young man who is ill, the brother of the person I love best in the world.' 'I will pray for him,' she said. I have not seen her since."

'Is it not a sweet trait of piety, dear, that girl begging prayers for you with a heavenly interest? She is charming. The angels will have given her prayers for you too.

'*The 22nd.*—A letter from Félicité, which gives me no better tidings of you. When will they

write, those who know more ? If they could see how a woman's heart beats, they would have pity. Why is it thus with us, that a desire consumes us, that a fear crushes us, an expectation torments; that one thought fills our whole mind, and that whatever we touch makes us shudder ? The idea of letters, the post-hour, the very sight of paper, God knows what I endure from them !

'The 24th.—My alarm grows. I have had a letter from M. de Frégéville, who thinks you are worse. My God, am I to learn thus by chance, as it were, that I may lose you ? No one nearer than a stranger writes to me of you, tells me he has seen you for my sake. In absence nothing is so cruel as silence. It is death beforehand. My friend, my brother, my beloved Maurice, I know not what to say, to think, to feel. After God, I live but in you, and like a martyr, in suffering. And what is that, if I might offer it to redeem you ? when I would plunge into a sea of pain to save you shipwreck. All redemption is through suffering; accept mine, my God, unite it to that of the sisters of Lazarus, to that of Mary, to the sword that pierced her soul by Jesus dying ;

pierce mine, my God, but for him let there be a resurrection !

‘ *The 25th.*—The postman has gone by without leaving me anything. The same doubts and uncertainties, and the same thronging fears ! To know and not to know. Oh ! anguish indescribable ! And here is the end of this note-book ; my God ! who will read it ? ’

VIII

WHO would read it ? Not poor Maurice. His death was drawing very nigh to, and the restlessness of a spirit on the eve of departure out of the world had come upon him so strongly, that the next news Eugénie heard was that he had set out with his wife for Le Cayla, and that they would wait for her to join them at Tours. It was not a long waiting. Eugénie started instantly on the summons. It was sultry midsummer weather, but on arriving at Tours she found Maurice not quite so ill as she feared. He was almost voiceless and greatly changed, but a week ago he had been worse. Some new remedies brought him by a homœopathic physician, a friend of M. Buquet, had given him

strength to begin the journey, and a week's rest at the house of some good English ladies at Tours, Indian friends of Caro's, gave him courage to continue it. They travelled in the early morning to avoid the excessive heat, and made another stage for rest at Angoulême, and another at Bordeaux. Here Maurice was visibly more exhausted, so exhausted that it seemed sometimes impossible that he could reach Le Cayla alive; yet his wife, in her fresh youth, was lovely as a rose of May, spite of her griefs, her night-wakings and watchings. It was on Eugénie the burden of care and sorrow wore most heavily. Maurice was very patient and resigned in his great suffering. His soul had turned again to its rest in God, during these days of pain and tribulation. At Easter he had received the holy sacrament, and he listened to his sister's reading of good books, and read his daily prayers as in the pious times before he and the world were acquainted. Perhaps he had never erred so far out of the safe way as Eugénie supposed; perhaps, also, he never put on again quite the same spiritual bonds as he wore in his youth; but he looked to the infinite mercy of God

and to the redemption of Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith ; and those who best loved him, hoping all things, believing all things, were at peace for his soul, and felt that death had lost its sharpest sting.

The rest of his story let Eugénie tell : it is to M. d'Aurevilly that she is writing.

‘It was on July 8, twenty days after our departure from Paris, towards six o'clock in the evening, that we came in sight of Le Cayla, the longed-for land, the resting-place of our poor invalid. His desire had been there, there only, for some time past. I never saw in him any desire more eager, and it grew anxious as we approached nearer. One might have said that he was making haste to be there in time to die. Did he foresee his end ? In the first transports of joy at beholding Le Cayla, he pressed Érembert's hand, who was by him. He intimated it to all of us as a discovery, to me who never felt less emotion of pleasure. I saw nothing but sorrow in this mournful return ; my sister, my father, who had come to meet us a little way on the road,

were full of distress. What a heart-breaking meeting! My father was dismayed; the tears rushed to Marie's eyes at the sight of Maurice. He was so changed, exhausted and pale, so weak that he could hardly guide his horse. It was terrifying. He seemed scarcely alive. The journey had killed him. But for the thought of arriving which kept him up, I doubt whether he would have accomplished it. He kissed his father, his sister, without much emotion. He seemed in a sort of ecstasy at the first sight of the château, and that must have exhausted all his powers of feeling; he was very greatly moved, I never saw him so much moved by anything again. He, however, kindly greeted the reapers who were cutting the corn, and gave his hand to some he knew, and to all the servants who came gathering round us.

'When we reached the salon: "Ah, how pleasant it is here!" he said, and sitting down on the sofa, he embraced my father again. We all stood looking on. His wife went to unpack; I took her place by him, and kissed his brow, as I had not done for long, and long. "You will

soon recover here—you seem better already,” I said. “I hope so—I am at home.” “And let your wife also feel herself at home; make her understand that she belongs to the family, and must act as in her own house.” “Yes, yes.” I do not remember what else we said during these few moments alone. Caroline came in again, and supper was announced, which Maurice found delicious. He ate with good appetite, and of everything. “Ah,” said he to Marie, “how excellent your cooking is!” . . .

‘We hoped much from the climate—his native air, the warm temperature of the South. The second day after our arrival it was cold; the invalid felt it; he shivered; his fingers were like ice. I saw that he was not so well as we had hoped, and that his recovery could not be speedy while these attacks recurred. There was no fever after, and the doctor reassured us. Doctors are often deceived, or deceivers. We persuaded the invalid not to leave his room the next day, attributing his chill to the coldness of the salon. As he always let us do what we pleased with him, he resigned himself, though unwillingly; but it

was so dull up there, and the morning was by-and-by so warm, that I myself encouraged him to come downstairs. "I will," said he; "here I am so far from everybody. It is more cheerful below with you all, and there is the terrace; I might take a walk. Let us go down." That terrace attracted him beyond everything else; there he could enjoy the air, the sun, the beautiful scenery, of which he was so fond. It was on that day, I think, that he pulled up some weeds round the pomegranate, and dug a few feet of Peruvian lilies; and, assisted by his wife, he stretched an iron wire against the wall to train the jessamine. That amused him. "Thus each day I shall try my strength a little," he said, as he went indoors. He was never out again. His weakness increased, and the slightest movement fatigued him. He only left his chair to take now and then a step or two, at the prayer of his wife, who tried every means to rouse him. She sang, she played, but all in vain; at least I saw no impression. He was lethargic, and equally indifferent to everything; he would sit for hours, his head lying sideways in his chair, his eyes

closed. He had, however, some better moments, some flashes of fuller life. It was in one of these moments that he seated himself at the piano, and played an air—poor air, that will thrill in my heart for ever.

‘I wish to tell you, also, how much cause for consolation my dear brother left me with regard to his Christian sentiments. And this does not date from his last days only. He had kept his Easter, and confessed and communicated. At the beginning of Lent he wrote to me: “The Abbé Buquet has been to see me: to-morrow he is to come again, to talk with me as you desire.” Dear friend! yes, I had desired it for his comfort, and he had done it for mine, not yielding for complacency, but from real conviction; he was incapable of making pretence of an act of faith. I saw him at Tours, alone in his own room on Sunday, reading the prayers of mass. For some time past he had enjoyed works of piety, and Saint Theresa and Fénelon, which I left him in Paris, had greatly profited him. God never ceased inspiring me for his good. Thus, I bethought me to bring away for the journey an admirable little book,

pious and delightful to read, translated from the Italian, "Father Quadrupani," with which he was charmed. He often asked me for a page or two : "Read me a little of Quadrupani." He listened attentively, then signed to me when I had read enough, closed his eyes and rested, his thoughts filled with the sweet, consoling, holy words. And each day at Le Cayla we read to him either the sermons of Bossuet or passages from the "Imitation of Christ." He liked to hear some amusing book as well, and having nothing new, we began Scott's "Old Mortality." He went through one volume with an appearance of interest, then gave it up. He was soon tired ; nothing entertained him long. Visits did not cheer him, and the only person with whom he cared to converse was his doctor, a man whose intelligence stirred his own, and held his attention. I remarked this moral influence, and that his mind woke up even at its weakest, if it came in contact with a kindred mind. Thus, the evening before his death, he laughed, never more heartily, than over your serial story, so lively and pleasant : *Il faut que jeunesse se passe*. He was charmed with it, and

would have it twice over; and he said to me, "Write and tell D'Aurevilly that—tell him that I have not laughed for ever so long as he has just made me laugh." Alas! he laughed no more! You gave him the last pleasure of the intellect that he had. He enjoyed everything that came to him from you. Friendship was the sweetest, the strongest of his sentiments, that which he felt the most deeply, that of which he liked best to talk, and which, I may say, he has carried with him to the grave. *Oh, yes, he loved you to the last!* I forget on what occasion it was that, being alone with him, I said, "Do you like me to write to your friend?" "*Do I like it!*" repeated he, with his heart in his voice. And the same day I sent you word how he was.

'We thought him very weak, nevertheless I still hoped. The cough was easier; his appetite kept him up. The very last day he dined with us, there were some figs at dessert that he longed for, and which I had the unkindness to prohibit; but as the others said he might have them, he ate one, which did him neither good nor harm; and I was saved the regret of thinking that I had denied

him anything. I wish to recall every incident of his last moments—would that I could remember more! A word of his to my father recurs to me. Our poor father came in from Gaillac through the burning sun, bringing his medicines. Maurice, when he saw him, held out his hand, and said, "Ah, sir, one must confess, you love your children dearly." And, indeed, my father did love him dearly. A little while after, rising from his chair to pass into the adjoining room, he said, speaking to himself, "I am very low." I heard it, that sentence of death from his mouth, without answering him a word, but I was struck. That night he was carried to his room. While he was preparing to go to bed, I talked with Érembert: "He is very weak to-night, but his chest is freer, the cough is gone. If we can get him to the month of October, he will be saved." It was the 18th of July, and ten o'clock at night!

'He passed a restless night. I heard his wife rise often and speak to him. I heard all in my room; I listened to all. Early in the morning I went to see him; his look alarmed me, it was a fixed look. "What does it mean?" I asked the

doctor, who presently arrived. "It means that Maurice is worse." Ah, my God! Éran went to call my father, who came in haste. The doctor drew him aside, and told him it was time to think of the last sacraments. The curé was sent for, and his sister also, who was at church. My father begged the doctor to prepare Caroline for the terrible tidings. He took her apart. I went to them, and found her all in tears: she said, "I knew it. For three months I have been preparing myself for this sacrifice." She knew that he must die. Thus the fatal blow did not terrify her, but she was overwhelmed with grief.

"My poor little sister," I said, putting my arm round her neck, "the moment of parting is come; but let us not weep; we must tell him; he must be prepared for the sacraments. Are you strong enough for this duty, or shall I do it?" "You do it, Eugénie, you!" She was choking with sobs. I went immediately to Maurice's bedside, and praying God to sustain me, I leant over him and kissed his forehead, all wet with the death-dew. "My friend," I said to him, "I wish to tell you something. I have written for you to

the Prince of Hohenlohe. You are aware that he has done some miracles of healing—God works by whom and how He wills. He is the sovereign healer of the sick. Have you not confidence in Him?” “Full confidence.” “Well, then, my dear, let us seek His mercy in perfect trust; let us unite in prayer, we with the Church, and you in your heart. We are going to have a mass with Holy Communion. Jesus Christ went to visit the sick, you know.” “Oh, yes, I am ready, I will join in your prayers.” “That is right, dear; the curé is coming, and you will confess. It will not hurt you to talk to the curé?” “Not at all.” “There, now you must prepare yourself to make your confession.” He asked for a book of self-examination, and begged Caro to recite for him the prayers that precede confession. I went out to make him some cooling drink, and meanwhile the curé arrived. Maurice asked him to wait awhile, as he was not yet quite ready. And we saw him with all his thoughts collected in holy meditation. Ah! that last meditation of his soul! In ten minutes or so, he called for the priest, and was with him half-an-hour, conversing, we are

told, with all the lucidity and calmness of mind that he possessed in full health. He said to the curé, when his confession was made, "I do not know whether I deceive myself, but do you think me very ill? If so, I will receive the extreme unction. To receive the Eucharist, I should prefer to be fasting, and to wait until to-morrow." Being told that the sick were relieved from fasting, he was ready, and began to prepare for the last sacraments. His wife, with a sad angelic piety, recited for him the prayers for the communion, which are so beautiful, and those for the dying, which are so touching; and then he asked for the prayers for the extreme unction, serenely and naturally, as for a thing quite expected.

'Still he felt hungry; he was faint, and asked me for his barley-water, which I gave him. As his sweat was heavy, I said to him, "My dear, do not put out your arm; I will feed you like a baby." A smile came on his lips where I laid the spoon, as I gave him the last food he took. Thus I served him once more; he was given back to me dying. I remarked it as a favour of God, granted to my sisterly devotion, that I was

suffered to render to my dear brother the last services to soul and body, since it happened that I prepared him for the last sacraments and gave him his last food. This may seem nothing, it is nothing really, to anyone else; but I bless God for it, as a reknitting of the old affection between me and Maurice before the final parting. . . .

‘When the holy viaticum arrived, Maurice, as it seemed to me, was feeling better; his eyes, wide open, had not that fixedness which startled me in the morning, nor were his senses at all obscured. He appeared morally refreshed, and in full enjoyment of all his faculties throughout the Divine ceremonies. He followed them in his heart very devoutly. When it came to the extreme unction, as he put out but one hand, the priest said, “The other,” and he presented it quickly. He listened to the simple and touching words, and received the viaticum with every expression of faith. He was still conscious; he still heard us; he pressed the hand of the curé, who continued speaking to him of heaven; he kissed the cross that his wife offered him, and then he began to sink. We embraced him; and so he died,

Friday morning, July 19, 1839, at half-past eleven, eleven days after our arrival at Le Cayla, eight months after his marriage.

‘This was the end of that life, so bound up with yours, remembered as well as I can remember it in my tears. Why were you not there? Why were you not present at the Christian death of your friend?’

PART THE FIFTH.

REUNITED.

Part the Fifth.

REUNITED.

I

It was over—all the earthly ache and void, all the pain, and love, and anguish. Maurice was dead. They buried him the day but one after in the churchyard at Andillac; and on their return from the funeral, Eugénie betook her to her little room, and began a new chapter of her journal, addressed to Maurice in Heaven. ‘Still to him, to Maurice dead, to Maurice in Heaven. He was the pride and the joy of my heart.’

The following morning she wrote to Louise at Rayssac that her brother, her dearest friend, was gone—was with God, she trusted; for he had died the death of one of the elect; and for her every pleasure and interest had disappeared from the world. They all mourned for him, all praised him; friends came from near and far to condole; and by-

and-by the time wore softly on, as if he had never been. Caroline, fair and fresh in her young widowhood, already looked back to her marriage as a troubled dream; and less than a month after his death she quitted Le Cayla, never to return to it again. Eugénie wrote in her journal one day and another: 'Death shall not divide us—shall not take you away from my thoughts;' but in a little while she begins to ask herself, Shall she go on with it? to what profit is it? and so the pen drops from her hand, and is resumed at longer and longer intervals, until, by the second week of September, she is of a mind to abandon it quite. She cannot keep up the illusion; at every line, at every word, she feels that Maurice will read it no more. Still, habit has made it a necessity to express her thoughts, to give her sentiments an outlet; and, after a space, she continues it with a fresh impulse of pleasure; not, however, addressing it to Maurice, but to Maurice's latest friend, M. d'Aureville, whom she calls her brother in Paris, her brother by adoption; and all the grace and strength of her genius reappear in page after page of the daily life at Le Cayla.

No event marked the rest of the year to its close. M. de Guérin was hale and well again; Éran was as gay as ever, Marie's round cheeks were as rosy; Caroline's letters were brief and slow to come—nobody remembered Maurice with longing but Eugénie. Each anniversary she kept and recorded—his birth-day, his wedding-day; and at the turn of the new year she had a glimpse of great promise—of promise that the name of Maurice dead would be known and glorious, as he had vainly dreamed for a few years that it might be, until the cares of life wrecked his ambition, and made him indifferent to fame. Some of his poems were put into the hands of Georges Sand, then in the flush of her reputation as a novelist; and with the quick sympathy of genius, she discerned how distinguished a spirit had passed unrecognised from the world. She paid Maurice a brilliant tribute of admiration, in an essay on his life, letters, and poems, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 15, 1840; where, also, 'Le Centaure' first appeared. But Eugénie, who valued her brother's Christian character much more dearly than his literary honour, was rather grieved than gladdened

by it; for it represented Maurice as a sceptical, Wertherish young poet—‘the André Chénier of Pantheism.’ M. de la Morvonnais wrote a counter-notice of his friend in the *Université Catholique*, and the two articles attracted much attention, much discussion. M. de Sainte-Beuve, the admirable critic, whose fiat in matters literary was allowed to be conclusive, entered with interest into the controversy, and gratified Eugénie by addressing her a letter in Maurice’s praise. His name grew popular; curiosity to know more of the unknown author of ‘Le Centaure’ was excited, and Madame Sand pledged herself to gratify it by publishing an edition of his literary remains. Eugénie entered into the project with all her heart. She began to collect and put in order her brother’s letters. Louise de Bayne sent her from Rayssac several that she had found amongst the papers of her father; and towards the end of the year Eugénie accepted invitations to Nevers and Paris, with the sole object of forwarding the publication of these precious reliques. M. Paul Quemper, who was in possession of Maurice’s Green Note-book—his journal—was written to, with a request that it might

be sent over to France ; and M. d'Aurevilly, who was charged with the editing of his friend's papers, was made the depositary of them, as they were slowly gathered together from the various hands amongst which they were dispersed.

Perhaps, already, at her arrival in Paris, Eugénie was forewarned of the disappointment that was to befall her hopes and endeavours, for on the last day of the year she closes her journal for ever—closes it with these pathetic words : ‘My God, how sad a thing is time, whether it goes or comes ! and how right was the saint who said, “Let us throw our hearts into eternity ! ” ’

In Paris she resided chiefly with her friend ‘Marie des Coques,’ Madame de Maistre, who was a confirmed invalid and a great sufferer. Her long days were spent chiefly in the sick-room, and she went out only to church ; but she had an absorbing interest in reviewing her brother's papers. M. Buquet brought her a singular letter, which Maurice had written him while still a student at Stanislas, and M. de la Morvonnois sent her a large parcel from Brittany, including the Green Note-book. A young man who had been greatly

devoted to Maurice, Charles Auguste Chopin, undertook to copy the originals for the printer, and the publication was even advertised. But now difficulties arose; the work was delayed and delayed again; and when Eugénie returned home in October, the desire of her life was unachieved, and not likely to be achieved.

She finished that year (1841) with a long loving letter to Louise de Bayne, entreating her to come to Le Cayla, where she was alone with her father, that they might renew their friendship in sweet converse by the Christmas fireside. 'I have lost so many hopes, that I believe only in those of Heaven,' she says in this letter—her last to the mountains; for Louise was on the eve of her marriage, and after her marriage she accompanied her husband to Algiers, an exile which proved the final separation between these very friends.

Notwithstanding the obstacles that molested the course of Eugénie's ambition for her brother, she still pursued her labours to rescue his name from forgetfulness; and during the winter she wrote a sketch of her family, and some anecdotes of the early years of Maurice, which were intended to

accompany his remains by way of preface. This preface she finished and sent to Paris, to the friend who had charged himself with the responsibility of the publication. To her surprise, it was not even acknowledged. Her brother Érembert married in March, and brought to Le Cayla a charming young wife. This domestic event created some distraction for Eugénie's thoughts; but when midsummer came and went without a word from Maurice's friend, she began to think he must be dead. It was easier to believe him dead than to believe him unfaithful to his noble promises—for had not Maurice loved him? Unfaithful, however, he was. And not only did he neglect his voluntarily assumed duty, but he even withheld from the family, when they would have reclaimed them, the papers that had been consigned to him. Months, years even, elapsed before they were all given up. A baby-girl was born at Le Cayla, by whose cradle Eugénie's heart rejoiced again; but she had looked to the appearance of Maurice's book with as much certainty as to the rising of the sun, and still that light delayed to shine upon her. And life went on. Caroline went back to

India to rejoin her own people. Louise, on the point of returning to Europe, died suddenly ; and about the same time Eugénie's last hopes of Maurice's glory died too. His papers were recovered and restored to her by the efforts of M. Paul Quemper, but they were of no use now that the scheme of publication was abandoned. She read them, read her own journal to Maurice, but the past was out of date save in her heart, and she put them away out of sight too. From this time her health declined, and on May 31, 1848, at Le Cayla, she peacefully laid down the great burden of life. A little while before she died, she gave a key to her sister Mimi, and, pointing to a certain drawer in her room, said, 'Take this key ; you will find some papers in that drawer which I wish you to burn. *All is but vanity!*'

II

EUGÉNIE was buried at Maurice's feet in the churchyard of Andillac. On his grave they had raised an obelisk of white marble ; on hers they reared a poor cross of wood. Marie set in order the pleasant little room where her sister had lived

and died, and kept it like a shrine. She looked over the papers in the drawer, and left them there; she could not give those tender records to the flames—not even in obedience to Eugénie's last wish.

In 1850, M. de Guérin died; and the year after him died his elder son, Érembert. Marie was thus left alone at Le Cayla with her brother's widow and their one little girl; and now this simple, household woman devoted herself to accomplishing that revival of the honour of her family which had not been granted to the efforts and desires of the two who had been its chief pride. M. de Trébutien, a friend of Maurice's young days in Paris, and now keeper of the Library at Caen, gave his energetic assistance; and in 1855 a tentative little volume was printed at the press of Messrs. Hardel in that town, for private circulation, under the title of '*Eugénie de Guérin. RELIQUIÆ.*' This volume contained her journal and some of her letters; and though the circulation was limited, it grew into notice, and M. de Trébutien was encouraged to proceed to the publication of that edition of Maurice's Remains, so long promised and so long

deferred. It appeared in 1861, being issued by Messrs. Didier, in Paris, and was received with such signal favour that Eugénie's Journal was reprinted for general circulation. This was welcomed with universal acclaim. It was 'crowned' by the Academy, was sold by thousands at home, and was translated abroad; and if Maurice and Eugénie could have profited in life by the success that followed them in death, they would have been tided well over that grinding poverty which was the source of their keenest sorrows and disappointments. But let us believe as they did, when most sorely perplexed and bestead, that God knows best, and does best for His own. No set work of their genius could have carried their names and their influence so far as their journals have done—those confidences of heart to heart and soul to soul, written for each other.

Says Maurice: 'Why do I disquiet myself for ever, asking, What shall I do with my life? Useless in the world as I seem, who knows whether God is not drawing from me some good that I cannot see; whether, unsuspected by myself, He

has not given me some virtue, some secret influence for the benefit of men ? ’

Says Eugénie : ‘ I often ask myself, to what profit all this writing, but that it pleases Maurice, who finds his sister there ? Still, if it affords me innocent amusement, pauses of rest in the day’s work ; if I garner there my flowers gathered in solitude, my thoughts, my reflections that God sends me for instruction and comfort, there is no harm in it. And if some heir to my cell finds here and there a true thought, and feels it, and is the better for it, though only for a moment, I shall have done good—the good I want to do.’

The moral of their story lies in this—they passed through the world the martyrs of unfulfilled desires ; and yet the end they had in view was accomplished, though they saw not how. The good they longed to do was done undiscernedly, and it lives after them. It lives after them in many pages of Divine counsel and consolation ; it lives after them in the example of Eugénie’s holy life and devoted love ; in the example of Maurice’s courage to walk in the weary ways of work where no poetry was, trusting that the

thread of Providence would guide and keep him safe ; in the record that a religious education is never lost ; that men may take up this worldly philosophy and that theological heresy without falling on spiritual death ; that there are more ways to heaven than the creeds proclaim, and wider gates than any of the sects would open.

The Christian life is the same in all Christian hearts, its practice of piety is the same in all Christian churches ; and whatever brings this assurance home to us should be dearly welcome. Eugénie de Guérin has shown how purely and freely a Catholic can live under a system that many of us regard as deadly to Christian morals ; and for the promotion of charity and unity, her *Journal* and *Letters* are worth a library of theological controversy. For this cause, if for no other, they merit to be more and more widely spread and studied, and for this cause the present monograph has been written, to bring them to the knowledge of the many English Protestants in whose way they may not yet have come.

III

LE CAYLA has become already a place of pilgrimage for travellers in the South of France. They turn aside from Alby to visit the graves of Eugénie and Maurice, under the shadow of the old church at Andillac. The brook goes with them, singing through the valley all the way from Cahuzac. The chalky hills rise to right and left, wild, arid. At a bend of the road they come in sight of a church tower—Andillac. They read the half-effaced name of MAURICE, and the date, 19 *Juillet*, 1839, upon the marble obelisk. On the graves of M. de Guérin and Érembert the iron crosses stand firm and strong; but the cross of wood for Eugénie has its glazed medallion broken, that should shelter her white crown of everlastings.

The road from Andillac to Le Cayla is rough and dreary; but still in the valley, and still by the brook, with tall silver poplars marking its course. Here is the Moulinasse—the mill and the washing-pool, where the valley contracts and the hills draw nearer. All at once, on a terraced slope, Le Cayla comes in sight, isolated in the full sweep of the

wind and full glow of the sun. Here is the way-side Cross—the place of partings, and the steep stony track which is the footpath to the château. This is the farm ; here are the dogs, the hens, the chickens, Eugénie's charge, her pets ; and here is the green terrace that Maurice loved, and the windows of the parlour open upon it. The white curtains drift outwards. There are landscapes on the walls. This is where Eugénie sat to spin at her wheel, and spun so many things besides. A spiral stair goes up to the great salon ; its chimney is high, sustained by caryatides of stone ; its windows look far and wide over the beautiful valley. On the left opens the room where Maurice died ; beyond it is the *chambrette* of Eugénie, just as she left it—the pictures, the writing-table, the vase of flowers, the what-not with her little treasures, gifts of friends, valued because they were gifts.

The north warren is grown up again, and the old vine bears its fruit, and clings with knotted hands to the great oaks, its supporters. The box-wood is green ; its familiar paths are still trodden, but trodden by strange feet. Those two, whose lives

have made Le Cayla a household word, have been buried in peace these twenty and thirty years, but their memories blossom in the dust, and their names live for ever.

FINIS.

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